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THE

LIFE

OF

FREDERIC THE SECOND,

KING OF PRUSSIA.

BY LORD DOVER.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE following pages have occupied the Author of them for some time, and have extended to a greater length than he originally intended; partly from abundance of materials, and partly from a wish on his part, having once commenced the work, to do justice to his subject.

He was originally induced to undertake the task, by a feeling, that a Life of Frederic the Second, which should collect under one view the authentic, yet scattered, accounts of that extraordinary man, was a desideratum in history and literature. This opinion he still retains; and any want of success, he conceives, is therefore to be attributed to his own imperfect execution, and not to the defect of interest in the history of the hero of Prussia.

He has endeavoured to avoid the error, into which historians and biographers are

too apt to fall; namely, that of becoming so enamoured of the character of the person, whose acts they are relating, that they involuntarily disguise or palliate his faults; and thus present him to the world in too favourable a point of view. How far he has succeeded in preserving impartiality, it remains for the reader to judge.

The authorities referred to in the course of the Life of Frederic will be found to consist principally of works already published; but the author has also had recourse for information to the manuscript collection of the Mitchell Papers, preserved in the British Museum; and to the Correspondence of Lord Marischal and Field-Marshal Keith, in the possession of the Honourable Admiral Fleming.

Dec. 1831.

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BOOK THE FIRST.

1712 — 1740.

FROM THE BIRTH OF FREDERIC TO THE DEATH OF HIS FATHER.

CHAPTER I.

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THE three immediate predecessors of Frederic the Great on the throne of Brandenburgh were princes, differing each from the others in almost every quality, mental as well as personal. It is therefore singular that they should all have contributed to the aggrandizement of their House; which, however, was the case. Each

in his different way assisted in laying the foundation of that structure of greatness and power, which it was the lot of their more highly gifted descendant to bring to perfection.

The Elector of Brandenburgh, George William, died in 1640, leaving to his son Frederic William, surnamed the Great Elector, great-grandfather of Frederic the Second, "a desolated country, of which his enemies were in possession—few troops—allies whose affections were suspected—and hardly any resources." * Most sovereigns would have sunk under such multiplied disadvantages: they only enabled Frederic William the better to show the extent of his talents, and to prove his title to the appellation of "the *Great* Elector," by that truest of all tests of greatness, the rising under adversity. The continued success of his arms and of his negotiations, and, above all, his wise and paternal government, which entirely restored to prosperity his dominions, reduced by the ravages of the thirty years' war to the lowest ebb of misery, have justly placed his name among those of the most admired modern sovereigns. "He united," to use the words of his descendant, "the merit of a great king to the indifferent fortune of an elector. Magnanimous, benevo-

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

lent, generous, humane, he never belied his character. He was the restorer and defender of his country, the founder of the power of Brandenburgh, the arbitrator among his equals, the honour of his nation; and, to sum up all in one word, his life formed his best panegyric."*

His son Frederic, the first King of Prussia, who succeeded him in 1688, was a vain and frivolous prince,—feeble alike in body and mind, and entirely devoted to pageants, processions, and the etiquettes of his little court. "He was great in little things, and little in great ones."†

In 1701, he brought upon himself the ridicule of Europe by the assumption of the royal dignity, then considered as belonging only to much more considerable sovereigns. But while he thus gratified his personal vanity, he was conferring on his family, without suspecting it, an essential benefit. His descendants were engaged by this step to use every endeavour for the aggrandizement of their territories, in order to render their house more worthy of the title which had been conferred upon it.

The royal dignity delivered the family of Brandenburgh from the yoke of servitude under which the house of Austria then held all the princes of Germany. It was a bait which Fre-

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg. † Ibid.

deric the First cast to all his posterity, and by which he seemed to say to them, *I have acquired for you a title — make yourselves worthy of it: I have laid the foundations of your greatness — it remains for you to complete the work.* Prince Eugene seems to have been the only person who, at the moment, foresaw the important consequences of this step; for he observed, when he heard the Austrian court had consented to it, "The emperor ought to hang the ministers, who have given him such treacherous advice." *

In the commencement of 1713, Frederic was succeeded on the throne by Frederic William, the father of Frederic the Great, — one of the strangest beings of whom history gives us any intelligence, — of a temper so violent and ungovernable, that his passions almost amounted to madness — of an avarice so excessive, even in his youth, that he hardly allowed his family the means of subsistence — of a nature so insensible to the feelings of humanity as to have twice attempted the life of his eldest son, first by his own hand, and afterwards by means of a mock trial † — he yet possessed some of the qualities of a great sovereign. His government of his different states was wise and paternal: he

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

encouraged commerce and industry, not only by favourable edicts, but also by devoting his time and his treasures to these objects. Finally, he was the creator of the Prussian infantry, which, for exact discipline, bravery, and the capability of sustaining hardships, was then considered the first in Europe.

His fondness for his tall regiment of guards is well known: every country bordering upon his own territories was ransacked in search of giants; and upon more than one occasion he was near going to war, rather than be compelled to give up his acquisitions of this kind. Nor was any class of men, or any profession, sacred from the violences of the Prussian press-gangs. Even priests were actually torn from the altars; as was the case, among others, with the Abbé Bastiani, who was carried off while celebrating mass in a village church in the north of Italy. He subsequently settled at Berlin, and was admitted into the intimate society of Frederic the Great. The extraordinary desire of Frederic William to recruit this regiment seems even to have got the better of the passion of avarice, which, on all other occasions, reigned paramount in his breast; for we find instances recorded, in which he gave great sums for single recruits of a gigantic stature. To one called "*the great Joseph*," who apparently was a monk, he gave 5000 florins for enlisting, and paid 1500 rix-dollars to the monastery he

belonged to.* In the procuring of an Italian, named *Andrea Capra*, the charge was as follows:—1500 rix-dollars as bounty money to the recruit himself, and 2000 rix-dollars to the persons who discovered and watched him, and to those who carried him off by force from his own country.† But the most expensive recruit of all appears to have been an Irishman, named *James Kirkland*, for the procuring of whom the following curious bill was brought in to the king:—

	£	s.	d.
For the man himself, on condition of his giving up his person	1000	0	0
For the sending of two spies	18	18	0
The journey from Ireland to Chester	30	0	0
From Chester to London	25	12	0
The man who accompanied him on the journey	10	10	0
To himself on his arrival	1	18	0
Three years of wages promised to him	60	0	0
To some of his acquaintance in London, who helped to persuade him	18	18	0
A fortnight's allowance	1	8	0
For a *uniform*, shoes, &c.	19	6	0
Journey from London to Berlin	21	0	0
Post-horses from Gravesend to London, and back	6	6	0
To other persons employed in the business	8	7	0
To two soldiers of the guard who assisted	15	15	0
To some persons for secrecy	12	12	0
Expenses at the inn at Gravesend	4	13	0
To a justice of peace	6	6	0

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.
† Ibid.

	£	s.	d.
To a man who accompanied and watched him constantly - - - - -	3	3	0
For a boat - - - - -	0	5	0
For letters to Ireland and back - -	2	10	0

Making in all the enormous sum, paid for a single recruit, of £1200 10*s.**

Nor was the anxiety of Frederic William confined to the present recruiting of his tall regiment, but it extended also to the future. One of his chief cares was the establishment of a race of giants in his dominions, from among whom his grenadiers might always be replenished. In furtherance of this object he was accustomed, whenever he saw a woman of extraordinary stature, to marry her forthwith to one of his guards, without in the slightest degree consulting her inclinations upon the subject. On one occasion, in going from Potsdam to Berlin, he met a young, handsome, and well-made girl, of an almost gigantic size: he was struck with her, and, having stopped and spoken to her, he learned from herself that she was a Saxon, and not married—that she had come on business to the market at Berlin, and was now returning to her village in Saxony. "In that case," said Frederic William to her, "you pass before the gate of Potsdam; and if I give you a note to the commandant, you can deliver it without going out of your way. Take charge, there-

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

fore, of the note which I am about to write, and promise me to deliver it yourself to the commandant, and you shall have a dollar for your pains." * The girl, who knew the king's character well, promised all that he wished. The note was written, sealed, and delivered to her with the dollar; but the Saxon, aware of the fate that attended her at Potsdam, did not enter the town. She found near the gate a very little old woman, to whom she made over the note and the dollar, recommending her to execute the commission without delay, and acquainting her at the same time that it came from the king, and regarded some urgent and pressing business. After this our gigantic young heroine continued her journey with as much rapidity as possible. The old woman, on the other hand, hastened to the commandant, who opened the note, and found in it a positive order to marry the bearer of it without delay to a certain grenadier, whose name was mentioned. The old woman was much surprised at this result: she, however, submitted herself, without murmuring, to the orders of his majesty; but it was necessary to employ all the power of authority, mingled with alternate menaces and promises, to overcome the extreme repugnance, and even despair, of the soldier. It was not till the

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

next day that Frederic William discovered he had been imposed upon, and that the soldier was inconsolable at his misfortune. No other resource then remained to the king, but to order the immediate divorce of the new-married couple.

The excesses of Frederic William in the use of wine, to which he was led, according to the testimony of the Princess of Bareith, by his minister, Grumkow, and the imperial envoy at his court, Seckendorff, in order that by these means they might obtain more complete possession of him, shortened his days. Though his constitution was an iron one, it yielded at last — he became dropsical, and died at the age of fifty-one.

Frederic, the second of that name, King of Prussia, was born at the palace at Berlin on the 24th of January 1712. His mother was Sophia Dorothea, daughter of George the First, King of England. At his christening, at which ceremony he was named Frederic Charles, his grandfather took an opportunity of gratifying his own vanity, by naming as godfathers and godmothers of the infant, the Emperor Charles the Sixth, the Czar Peter, the Republic of Holland, and the Canton of Berne. The care of the first years of his life was entrusted to Madame de Rocoule, a female French refugee, who had filled the same charge about his father; and who is supposed first to have given him that taste

for the French language and literature, in preference to every other, which continued to form a distinguishing feature of his character during his whole life.

The eldest sister of Frederic, Frederica Sophia Wilhelmina *, afterwards Margravine of Bareith, was his senior by two years and a half, having been born on the 3d of July 1709. She and her brother were educated together, and contracted in early youth that mutual affection, and that admiration for each other's talents, which continued unchanged and undiminished till the death of the princess. She appears to have been a woman of superior understanding and great instruction. Her life was a tissue of apparently undeserved misfortunes. During her childhood she was ill-treated both by father and mother. Her hand was at different periods destined to Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, to a prince of Russia, to Augustus the Second King of Poland, and to Frederic Prince of Wales; yet was finally bestowed upon a little German prince, who was unworthy of her both in station and character. She died at the age of 50, much regretted by her heroic brother.

The year after the birth of Frederic, Frederic William ascended the throne; and the change in the manners and habits of the court of Berlin

* She was generally called by the latter name.

was instantaneous. The costly retinue and numerous household which had belonged to his father were dismissed, as well as the learned men who had been pensioned and formed into an academy by his mother; who, herself a person of great merit, had the good taste to be the friend of Leibnitz, and the patroness of all kinds of literature. Of the character of her husband she seems to have been fully aware; as upon a certain occasion, when Leibnitz had sent her a paper upon *infinite littleness*, she is reported to have said, "How foolish of Leibnitz to think that I want to learn any thing respecting infinite littleness; has he forgot that I am the wife of Frederic the First; or does he think I do not know my own husband!"* Her name was Sophia Charlotte, a princess of the house of Hanover. She died in 1705, and her character is thus given by her grandson.

"She was a princess of distinguished merit, who joined all the graces of her sex to the charms of talent and to the lights of reason: she had travelled during her youth with her parents into Italy and France. She was destined to fill the throne of France. Louis the Fourteenth was touched with her beauty; but political reasons caused her marriage with the dauphin to be broken off. This princess brought with her

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

into Prussia the talent of society, true politeness, and the love of the arts and sciences. She founded the Royal Academy: she invited Leibnitz and many other men of science to her court. Her enquiring mind wished to become acquainted with the first principles of things. Leibnitz, whom she questioned one day upon this subject, said to her, 'Madam, there is no way of contenting you: you wish to know the wherefore of the wherefore!' Charlottenburg was the place of resort of all persons of taste: all sorts of diversions, and fêtes of various kinds, rendered this abode delightful, and the court brilliant. Sophia Charlotte had a powerful understanding: her religion was purified from superstition; her temper was gentle; her mind was cultivated by the study of all the best works in French and Italian. She died at Hanover, in the midst of her family. One of her ladies of honour, whom she was very fond of, wept: 'Do not grieve for me,' she replied, 'for I am going at present to satisfy my curiosity respecting the principles of those things which Leibnitz was never able to explain to me, concerning space, infinitude, existence, and annihilation: and I am preparing for the king my husband the spectacle of a funeral pageant, in which he will have a new occasion of displaying his magnificence.' On her death-bed, she recommended to the Elector of Hanover, her

brother, the men of science whom she had protected, and the arts which she had cultivated. Frederic the First consoled himself by the ceremony of her funeral, for the loss of a wife, whom he ought never to have ceased to regret."*

To return to the change in the court on the accession of Frederic William. We find that he reduced his establishment to that of a private gentleman; and, to throw ridicule upon his academy, appointed a madman president, and gave the pensions of the members to regimental surgeons and midwives.†

After the conclusion of the treaty of Utrecht, which took place in the same year in which Frederic William ascended the throne of Prussia, and which gave peace to Germany as well as to the greater part of Europe, the attention of the king was turned for some time almost exclusively to the arrangement of the internal government of his different states. He laboured especially to restore order in the finances, the police, the administration of justice, and the army, all of which had been equally neglected under the preceding reign. "He possessed a mind capable of great application, in a

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

† Vie de Frederic II.

robust frame: there perhaps never existed a man with a greater talent for detail. If he descended to the consideration of the most minute things, it was because he was convinced that it is a multiplicity of small things which produces great events. He considered every thing that he did with reference to its bearing upon the general view of his political affairs; and by labouring to perfect the details, he considered that he was attending to the perfection of the whole. He retrenched all useless expenses, and stopped the torrents of profusion by which his father had diverted the streams of public wealth to vain and unnecessary uses. The court was the first part of the state that felt this reform. He only kept there the number of persons absolutely necessary for his dignity, or useful to the state. Of one hundred chamberlains who belonged to his father, he retained but twelve: the others took to the profession of arms, or to that of diplomacy. He reduced his own expense to a very small sum, saying that a prince ought to be sparing of the blood and treasure of his subjects. He was in this respect a real philosopher upon a throne; very different from those, who make their barren and useless science consist in the consideration of those abstract questions, which seem to elude our research. He gave the example of an austerity and a frugality worthy of the first times of the Roman Re-

public: the enemy of the imposing and outward pomp of royalty, his stoical virtue also prevented his making use of the commonest comforts of life. These simple manners and this great economy formed the most perfect contrast possible with the vain pomp and the profusion of Frederic the First. The political object which Frederic William proposed to himself by his interior arrangements was, to render himself formidable to his neighbours by the keeping up of a numerous army. The example of George William* had taught him how dangerous it is for a prince to be without the power of defending himself; and that of Frederic the First, whose troops were less at his own disposal than at that of the Allies who paid for them, had convinced him that a sovereign is only respected in proportion as he renders himself redoubtable by his power."†

In 1714, the generals of Charles the Twelfth, King of Sweden, being unable to resist the united armies of the Czar and the King of Poland, who were laying waste Swedish Pomerania, and had bombarded Stettin the capital, consented to deliver that town in sequestration to the King of Prussia; who accepted the deposit,

* The Elector George William, grandfather to Frederic William.

† Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

and paid 400,000 crowns to the allied troops to induce them to consent to the agreement.* No sooner, however, had Charles the Twelfth, who had now been for eleven months in bed at Demotica near Adrianople, heard of this transaction, than he entirely disavowed his generals, and proclaimed his determination of never repaying the 400,000 crowns advanced by the King of Prussia.† This conduct, and a successful attack made by the Swedes upon the Prussian troops, who had also sequestered and garrisoned the island of Usedom, an important fortification at the mouth of the Oder, induced the King of Prussia in 1715 to abandon the neutrality he had hitherto professed, and to unite his forces with the Russians, Saxons, and Danes, who were leagued together to curb the restless and unceasing encroachments of the Swedish monarch. It appears that it was with considerable unwillingness that Frederic William brought himself to declare war against Charles; for upon hearing of the conduct of the Swedish troops at Usedom, he could not help saying, "Why will a king I esteem oblige me to become his enemy."‡

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

† Voltaire, Histoire de Charles XII.

‡ Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

The first enterprize which the allies undertook in conjunction, was the siege of Stralsund, where Charles was now arrived from Turkey, and had given immediate notice of his intention of carrying on the war with renewed vigour. Frederic William commanded his own troops, which amounted to 20,000 men, in person, as did also the King of Denmark*; and "thus was presented to Europe the spectacle of a king besieged by two kings in person."† The Prince of Anhalt was, in fact, the real commander under the two sovereigns. The fate of Stralsund, and the flight of Charles, are too well known to require mention here. The death of this prince, which happened shortly afterwards, was the signal for peace, which was concluded at Stockholm; and Frederic William was rewarded for the bravery of his troops, by the acquisition of a part of Pomerania to the crown of Prussia. At the commencement of the siege of Stralsund, Frederic William wrote the following letter to his council of state at Berlin, which shows that at this time his feelings for his eldest son were what might have been expected from a father, though subsequently they became so much and so unaccountably changed.

* Frederic IV., who succeeded his father Christian V. in 1699, and died himself in 1730.

† Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

"From the Camp before Stralsund,
26th April 1715.

"As I am a man, and may therefore die or be shot, I command you all in that case to take care of Fritz*, for which God will reward you. And I give you all, beginning with my wife, my malediction, and may God punish you as well temporally as eternally, if you do not bury me after my death in the vault in the chapel of the palace at Potsdam. You are not to permit any feasting or ceremonies at my funeral, except that you shall order the regiments in the neighbourhood to fire a salute."†

At the siege of Stralsund, Frederic William first became acquainted with a French refugee, by name Du Han de Jendun, who had left France, together with his father, on account of his religion, at the time of the revocation of the edict of Nantes, and had since been educated at the French college at Berlin. He had accompanied the son of the field-marshal Count Dohna to the siege, as his preceptor; and the circumstance of a tutor, who followed his pupil to the field so pleased the king, that he determined to put him about the prince royal in a similar capacity; a determination which, on his return to Berlin, he, without delay, put into effect.‡

* Frederic.

† Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

‡ Ibid.

Du Han appears to have been a man of some merit, and was adroit enough to obtain the confidence and affection of the young prince, during the eleven years he continued with him, to a very great degree. "He possessed considerable cleverness, and a great deal of knowledge. It was to this preceptor that Frederic owed his instruction, and the good principles which regulated his conduct during the early part of his life, and which always continued to have some influence on his mind." *

The return of tranquillity in the north of Europe enabled Frederic William to turn his undivided attention to the improvement of his kingdom, and the discipline of his troops — the two objects which ever afterwards continued to occupy him. For this purpose he made yearly visits to his different provinces, taking with him generally the young Frederic; where he redressed grievances, encouraged agriculture, trade, and manufactures, and exercised and reviewed his troops. He also by degrees increased the numbers of the latter, till at the end of his reign they amounted to 70,000 effective men, considerably more than double the force possessed by his father. It is said, that an accidental circumstance, which occurred to him early in life, first gave to Frederic William the idea, as well

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

as the desire, of increasing his military force. This prince in his youth served the campaigns in Flanders; and while he assisted at the siege of Tournay, he one day found two English generals disputing together. The one affirmed that the King of Prussia could scarcely afford to maintain 15,000 men, without the assistance of subsidies, while the other contended that he could support 20,000. The young prince, with some warmth, said to them, "The king my father could maintain 30,000, if he chose it." * The English took this answer for the boasting of an ambitious young man, who wished to magnify the resources of his country: but Frederic William, when he came to the throne, proved that he had not exaggerated; and the good administration of his finances enabled him, from the first year of his reign, to maintain 50,000 men, without receiving subsidies from any power.

Towards the end of this year arrived the Czar Peter the Great, and his wife Catherine, at Berlin; who seem to have been most unwelcome guests to the court, on account of their uncouth and barbarous manners; and to the king, on account of the additional expense which was entailed on him by their visit. Upon this occasion he wrote the following characteristic epistle

* Mémoires pour servir a l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

to the general directory: "I shall allot 6000 dollars, to be paid by the finance directory, to defray the charge of the czar's journey from Memel to Wesel. While he is at Berlin, the expense of his entertainment will be a separate account. I will not give a single farthing more; but to the world you must give out that it has cost me 30,000 or 40,000 dollars." *

They were lodged at Monbijou, a palace belonging to the queen, who, to prevent a recurrence of the damage which the Russians had caused in all the other places they had inhabited, had the house unfurnished, and carried away every thing that was fragile in it.† The czar, his wife, and all their court arrived some days after this at Monbijou by water. The king and queen received them on the bank of the river. The king gave his hand to the czarina to assist her to land. As soon as the czar had disembarked he gave his hand to the king, and said to him, "I am glad to see you, my brother Frederic." He afterwards approached the queen, and wished to embrace her, but she repulsed him. The czarina began by kissing the hand of the queen, which she did several times. She then presented to her the Duke and Duchess of Mecklenbourg, who accompanied

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

her, and 400 pretended ladies of her suite. They were for the most part German maid-servants, who united the offices of attendant ladies, of women of the bed-chamber, of cooks, and of washerwomen. Almost all these creatures carried each in their arms a child in rich clothing; and when they were asked if they were their own, they answered, with many reverences after the manner of the Russians, "The czar has done me the honour to beget this child for me." The queen would not salute these creatures. The czarina in return treated the princesses of the blood with a great deal of haughtiness, and it was with much difficulty that the king persuaded her to salute them.*

"I saw all this court the day after †, when the czar and his wife came to pay the queen a visit. That princess received them in the great apartments of the palace, and went to meet them as far as the guard-room. The queen gave her hand to the czarina, and putting her on her right, conducted her to her audience chamber. The king and the czar followed them. As soon as the latter prince saw me, he recognized me, having seen me five years before. He took me in his arms, and hurt my face by kissing me. I gave him boxes on the ear, and fought with him as much as I was able, telling him that I did not like

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† It is the Princess of Bareith who speaks.

these familiarities, and that he dishonoured me. He laughed much at this idea, and conversed with me for a considerable time. They had before given me my lesson; so I talked to him of his fleet, and of his conquests, which charmed him so much, that he said several times to the czarina, that he would willingly give up one of his provinces to have a child like me. The czarina also caressed me much. She and the queen were placed under the canopy, each in an arm-chair; I was by the side of the queen, and the princesses of the blood were opposite to her. The czarina was short and fat, of a very dark complexion, and had neither air nor grace. It was sufficient to see her in order to discover her low extraction. From her dress one would have taken her for a German actress. Her clothes had been bought at a second-hand clothes shop: they were old-fashioned, and excessively charged with silver and dirt. The front of her stomacher was ornamented with precious stones: the design was a singular one—a double eagle, of which the plumes were set with very small diamonds, very ill mounted. She had a dozen orders, and as many portraits of saints and relics, attached along the edge of her gown, so that when she walked one thought one heard the bells of a mule, as all these orders knocking one against the other made the same sort

of noise. The czar, on the other hand, was very tall, and rather well made; his face was regularly handsome; but the expression of his countenance had something so harsh in it that it frightened one. He was habited as a sailor, with a dress all of the same colour. The czarina, who spoke German very ill, and could not understand what the queen said to her, had her fool brought to her, and conversed with her in Russian. This poor creature was a Princess Galitzin, who had been reduced to act the fool in order to save her life. Having been implicated in a conspiracy against the czar, she had twice received the knout. I do not know what she said to the czarina, but that princess was in constant fits of laughter. At length we went to dinner, and the czar placed himself by the side of the queen. It is well known that this prince had once been poisoned in his youth: a most subtle poison had fallen on his nerves, which caused him sometimes to fall into a sort of convulsion that could not be prevented. An accident of this kind happened to him at table: he made many contortions, and as he had his knife in his hand, and gesticulated with it very near the queen, she was so frightened, that she several times wished to get up and go away. The czar re-assured her, and begged her to tranquillize herself, as he would do her no harm: at the same time he took her hand, and squeezed

it with so much violence in his own, that the queen was obliged to cry out, which made him laugh heartily, saying at the same time, that her bones were much more delicate than those of his Catherine. Every thing was prepared after supper for a ball, but he went away as soon as we were risen from table, and returned alone and on foot to Monbijou. The next day he was shown all that was most remarkable at Berlin, and among other things the cabinet of medals and of antique statues. There was one among these last, as I have been told, which represented a pagan divinity in a very indecent posture. This statue was regarded as very rare and valuable, and as one of the finest in the collection. The czar admired it much, and ordered the czarina to kiss it. She wished to refuse, but he became angry, and said to her in bad German, *kopab*, which signifies, I will cut your head off, if you do not obey me. The czarina was so frightened, that she did all that he wished. He asked for this statue without the slightest hesitation, as well as for several others, which the king could not refuse to give him. He did the same with respect to a cabinet, of which all the pannels were of amber. This cabinet was unique in its kind, and had cost immense sums to the King Frederic the First. It had the sad fate to be sent to St. Petersburgh, to the great regret of every body.

This barbarous court departed at length two days after this. The queen immediately returned to Monbijou. The desolation of Jerusalem reigned there; I never saw any thing like it: every thing was so entirely ruined, that the queen was obliged to have almost the whole house rebuilt."*

About this time, according to the Memoirs of the Princess of Bareith, where alone the circumstance is mentioned, the life of the young Frederic was in considerable peril from a conspiracy, which was intended to envelope in one common destruction the persons of himself and of his father. In order to the better understanding of this strange story, it is necessary that we should retrace our steps to an earlier period in the life of Frederic William. While only prince royal, he had selected as his two favourites Leopold prince of Anhalt-Dessau, and the General Grumkow. The first a man of talent, especially in his military capacity, but ambitious, false, and cruel. His character was violent and obstinate: quick but prudent in his enterprises, to the valour of a hero he united the experience of having served in the finest campaigns of Prince Eugene. His manners were ferocious; his ambition without measure; learned in the art of sieges, a fortunate general, a bad citizen,

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

and capable of all the enterprises of the Marius's and the Sylla's, if fortune had favoured his ambition in the same way it did those Romans.* The other is described as a man of superior understanding, cultivated, agreeable, and insinuating; but concealing under this fair outside a total want of principle. The great object of these two individuals was, first to obtain, and then to preserve a complete ascendancy over the mind of Frederic William, in which they were unfortunately too successful. Of the means to be employed for this purpose they seem to have been in no way scrupulous. The Prince of Anhalt had been disappointed by the marriage of Frederic William to the Princess of Hanover, who was preferred to his own niece, a princess of the house of Orange.† Whether from a vindictive feeling of revenge towards the innocent Sophia Dorothea, or from a wish to prevent her obtaining influence over her husband, his first care after the marriage was to inspire the mind of Frederic William with sentiments of jealousy, — a fault to which he was by nature too prone, and which for many years was the source of great unhappiness to the princess.

The next scheme of the Prince of Anhalt was

* Mémoires pour servir a l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

laid in conjunction with Grumkow. They concerted together to persuade the king to consent to a project for the marriage of his eldest daughter to the Margrave of Schwedt, nephew of Anhalt, and heir to the throne of Prussia in the case of Frederic William's decease without male heirs. The weakly constitution of the young Frederic, then the king's only son, gave them hopes that this contingency might occur; and the marriage proposed would then ensure to the Margrave of Schwedt the entire inheritance of every thing possessed by the house of Brandenburgh. Frederic William listened with favour to the proposition; but the extreme youth of the princess deferred the final execution of the plan. In the meanwhile the health of Frederic improved so much that all hope of profiting by his death seemed at an end.

Determined not to lose the fruits of their intrigues, the confederates resolved to effect by violent means what nature denied them. A favourable opportunity for putting their designs into execution occurred in the arrival at Berlin of some comedians and rope-dancers. Grumkow engaged to induce the king to attend one of their exhibitions, and to take his son Frederic with him: in order to obtain the latter object, he was to urge that the si ht of the representation would be likely to dissipate, or at least to diminish, the melancholy humour of the young prince. The theatre, which was made of wood, was to be set

on fire, as if by accident, as soon as the royal family entered it; and, in the midst of the tumult occasioned by this, the king and the prince were to be strangled. The palace was also to be set on fire, in order to add to the confusion; and the crime being accomplished, Anhalt and Grumkow were to take possession of the government in the name of the Margrave of Schwedt, who was then in Italy. The king agreed to the proposal of going to the theatre, as soon as it was made to him; and the day arrived which was to consummate the scheme.

Fortunately, the Count Manteufel, envoy from the King of Poland at Berlin, was in the intimate confidence of Grumkow; and becoming acquainted with the particulars of the conspiracy, and being struck with a natural horror at the turpitude of the crime projected, communicated the particulars of it to his mistress, Madame de Blaspil, one of the queen's favourites. Madame de Blaspil did not disclose the whole plot to the queen: she appears to have been afraid of doing so, knowing how high Grumkow and Anhalt stood in the king's favour. She, however, told enough to frighten the queen exceedingly, and advised her in any case to prevent the king from going to the theatre. The steps Sophia Dorothea took to effect this object, mark very clearly the awe and fear of her husband in which she lived. She seems never to have contemplated

the making him acquainted with what she knew; but, leaving him in ignorance, she sought to detain him from the theatre by indirect means.

The young Frederic was intimidated with frightful descriptions of the representation; and her eldest daughter was enjoined, by caressing and amusing her father, to make him forget the hour of his appointment; and was further told, that upon her success in this depended the lives of her father and brother. The princess describes herself as having been successful for some time; but that at length the king, remembering his engagement, started up, and holding his son by the hand, went towards the door of the apartment. Frederic wept and resisted, to the great astonishment of his father, who at length, taking him up in his arms, was about to carry him away by force. "It was then," says the princess, "that I threw myself at his feet, which I embraced and bathed with my tears; while the queen placed herself before the door, and besought him for that day not to leave the palace."* The king, surprised more and more, demanded from the queen the reason of this conduct. She was unable to give him satisfactory answers, but confessed to him what she knew; and the next day he was made acquainted with the whole conspiracy by Madame de

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

Blaspil. Grumkow was confronted with her, and solemnly denied any knowledge of the transaction.

Upon this it became necessary to examine farther into the mystery of iniquity, and the principal person appointed for that purpose was the fiscal-general Katch, a friend of Grumkow's. Katch is thus described by the Princess of Bareith: — "Worthy of the protection of Grumkow, he was the living image of the unjust judge in Scripture, and was feared and abhorred by all good people." * By ingenious browbeating and cross-questioning Madame de Blaspil was thrown off her guard, and led into contradictions. Finally, not being able to produce proofs of what she asserted, she was condemned to confinement as a criminal in the fortress of Spandau, while Grumkow and Anhalt were restored to favour. The Princess of Bareith concludes her relation of this singular transaction with the following sentence: — "I became acquainted with all the particulars which I have just related from the queen my mother: they are known to only a very few individuals. The queen took great pains to conceal them; and my brother, after he came to the crown, had all the writings relating to the trial burnt. Madame de Blaspil was released at the end of a year, and

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

her imprisonment was changed to banishment in the territory of Clèves. The king saw her some years afterwards, showed her much civility, and pardoned her the past. After the death of this prince, the king my brother, to please the queen, placed her as governess to my two youngest sisters."

It has been already stated, that the history of this conspiracy exists only in the Memoirs of the Princess of Bareith, so often quoted in this work, and from which the circumstances just related are extracted. Yet Frederic the Great certainly alludes to it, though indirectly, in his Memoirs of the House of Brandenburgh; where, having given an account of the intrigues of a miserable Hungarian, named Clement, who pretended to discover conspiracies against the person of the king, and who had just expiated his offences by a violent death, he adds, "Nevertheless these accusations occasioned the ruin of some fortunes, and caused for a time distrusts and suspicions. Calumny introduces itself more easily into the minds of princes than justification."* This passage, and the subsequent favour shown by Frederic to Grumkow, whom, on his accession to the throne, he made a field-marshal and governor of Berlin, would at the first view lead

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

us to imagine that he disbelieved the existence of the conspiracy. A little reflection upon the character of this prince will however be sufficient, to make it very doubtful whether he really disbelieved it, or only was anxious the world should think he did, for political purposes. What those purposes might have been, it is impossible for us at this distance of time to decide; but, after reading the circumstantial and clear relation of the conspiracy, which may be found in the memoirs of his sister, who must have been fully aware of all the circumstances and bearings of the case, it is surely fair to infer the probability, that some views of this kind occasioned the insertion of the passage we have just read in the Memoirs of the House of Brandenburgh, and the honours bestowed on Grumkow. Upon the whole we may, perhaps, without danger of falling greatly into error, come to the following conclusion:—that the facts stated by the Princess of Bareith are generally true; though, having come through the channel of the queen, who was the personal enemy of both Anhalt and Grumkow, they may have been somewhat highly coloured.

CHAPTER II.

CHARACTER OF FREDERIC'S GOVERNORS. — ILLNESS OF FREDERIC WILLIAM, — AND OF HIS ELDEST DAUGHTER. — — FREDERIC WILLIAM ENDEAVOURS TO INSPIRE HIS SON WITH A MILITARY TASTE. — NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE ENGLISH COURT FOR A DOUBLE MARRIAGE. — GEORGE THE FIRST AT CHARLOTTENBURG. — UNFOUNDED JEALOUSY OF FREDERIC WILLIAM TOWARDS HIS QUEEN: — HIS VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR. — FREDERIC AT THE AGE OF FOURTEEN: — DISLIKED AND ILL-TREATED BY HIS FATHER. — HYPOCHONDRIAC MALADY OF FREDERIC: — HIS VISIT TO DRESDEN: — HIS FATHER'S CRUEL TREATMENT OF HIM CONTINUES. — UNHAPPY LIFE OF THE PRUSSIAN ROYAL FAMILY.

At the age of six years, his health being now much improved, Frederic was taken out of the hands of Madame de Rocoule, and put into those of the Count Finckenstein and Colonel Kalkstein, as governor and sub-governor. The former, who had commanded the Prussian auxiliary troops at the battles of Blenheim and Malplaquet, having previously served with credit in the armies of Louis the Fourteenth, was a man of probity and a good officer, but low in intellect; and the latter is represented to have been of a flattering and intriguing character.* The Princess

* Vie de Frederic II.

of Bareith sketches him in her severe manner thus:—"Monsieur de Kalkstein possesses a spirit of intrigue: he studied under the Jesuits, and has profited much by their lessons. He affects a great deal of devotion, and even of bigotry. He is always talking of being an honest man, and has managed to deceive many, who have really thought him such. His disposition is supple and insinuating, but he conceals under all this fair exterior the blackest heart. By the unfavourable accounts which he made daily of the most innocent actions of my brother, he embittered the mind of the king, and inflamed him against him." * Fortunately for the young prince, Du Han continued to exercise the office of preceptor, and was his real instructor. He was also instructed in religion by the preacher of the court, André; and in mathematics and fortification by the Major Schöning, an engineer of merit. At the same time with these appointments, a separate allowance was made to Frederic, which at first consisted of 360 dollars yearly, and afterwards was increased to 600: a miserable pittance for the support of an heir apparent to a crown.

The year 1719 affords us but few anecdotes of the court of Prussia. In the course of it the king had a violent illness: he also lost his second

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

son by a dysentery: his eldest daughter, the Princess Wilhelmina, had the same disorder, followed by a violent brain fever, but recovered.* She describes herself at this time as in a very miserable condition, in consequence of the ill-treatment she received from her governess, Leti, the daughter of Gregorio Leti the historian, who, she says, beat her cruelly. Upon one occasion she was pushed violently down stairs by this unworthy attendant; on another a candlestick was thrown at her head, which cut it severely: in short, she seems to have gone through every variety of cruel treatment till the year 1721; when the practices of Leti being discovered, she was dismissed with ignominy; and her place about the princess was filled up by Madame de Sonsfeld.

Frederic William admired and loved nothing so much, as has been before stated, as his tall regiment; and his sole delight consisted in exercising and manœuvring them from morning to night; an occupation which gained for him, from his brother-in-law, George the Second of England, the appellation of "The Corporal of Potsdam." † Such being his own tastes, it was

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Frederic William retorted by calling George, "Mon frère, le comedien." My brother, the actor.—See Memoirs of the House of Brandenburgh.

natural that his first object with his son should be, to make him a good soldier. Accordingly we find, that as soon as Frederic was eight years old, he gave him a sort of arsenal of small arms of various kinds, suited to his age and strength; and shortly afterwards made him colonel of a regiment of boys, the drilling and disciplining of which was intended to form his principal study. The military habits and studies of Frederic, which in after life formed one of the most prominent parts of his character, do not appear to have originated in his youth, but rather to have grown out of his situation, and the necessity of his affairs, when called upon to wield the Prussian sceptre. On the contrary, we find that in early life he preferred his flute and his books to his regiment; an offence which Frederic William was accustomed to visit with the utmost severity, with blows and abuse, and sometimes with confinement on bread and water.*

The years 1721 and 1722 appear to have been principally occupied by negotiations with the court of England, for a double marriage between the two royal families; an event upon which the Queen of Prussia had set her heart. According to this plan, the Princess Wilhelmina was to marry the Duke of Gloucester, after-

* Vie de Frederic II.

wards better known as Frederic Prince of Wales; and the young Frederic, one of the English princesses. George the First of England was, as it is well known, much influenced by the women about him; to whom, therefore, the court of Prussia were obliged to apply for their good offices in the affair of the double marriage. From the disunion which reigned among them, as well as from the characters which have been transmitted to us of them, we may form some idea of the difficulty of conciliating their various views and interests in favour of any one object. The Princess of Bareith gives us the following sketch of the English court, beginning with the king. "The King of Great Britain was a prince who piqued himself upon having much feeling, but unfortunately he had never applied himself to discover what constituted that quality. There are many virtues which, pushed to excess, become vices. This was his case. He affected a firmness which degenerated into harshness, and a tranquillity that might have gone by the name of indolence. His generosity only extended itself to his favourites and his mistresses, by whom he allowed himself to be governed: the rest of the world were excluded from a participation in them. His haughtiness, since he came to the throne, was become insupportable. Two qualities rendered him estimable, — his love of equity and of justice. He was without rancour,

and piqued himself on constancy towards those whom he liked. His manner was cold: he spoke but little, and was only fond of the conversation of foolish people. The Countess Schulembourg, then Duchess of Kendal and Princess of Eberstein, was his mistress, or rather he had married her with the left hand. She was of the number of those persons who are so good, that, in fact, they are not good for any thing. She had neither vices nor virtues, and all her study consisted in endeavouring to preserve her favour, and to prevent any other person from wresting it from her."

"The Princess of Wales* had a great deal of cleverness, much knowledge and instruction, and a great capacity for political affairs. She gained all hearts on her first arrival in England. Her manners were gracious, and she was affable: but she had not the good fortune to preserve the love of the people, as they found means to discover her real character, which did not answer to the exterior. She was imperious, false, and ambitious. She has been often compared to Agrippina; and she would certainly have cried out, like that empress, 'Let all perish, provided I reign.' The prince† her husband had not more talent than the king his father:

* Queen Caroline.

† Afterwards George the Second.

he was of a quick and violent temper, haughty, and of an unpardonable avarice."*

"My lady Arlington, who held the second rank, was the natural daughter of the old Elector of Hanover and of a Countess Platen. One might say of her with truth, that she had cleverness like a devil, for it was entirely turned to evil. She was vicious, intriguing, and as ambitious as the other women, whose characters I have just drawn. These three women governed the king by turns. Although they quarrelled dreadfully with one another, their opinions were united on one point, which was their anxiety, that the young Duke of Gloucester should neither marry a princess of a great house, nor one possessed of great talents; in order that they themselves might continue in possession of the government."†

In the spring of 1723 George the First came to Hanover, accompanied by his mistresses; and the King and Queen of Prussia took the opportunity of a visit they paid to him there, to renew the discussion respecting the double alliance. At first difficulties seemed to intervene, but the Duchess of Kendal being gained over

* Apparently George the First never liked his son's wife, though at times she may have had that influence over him, which a strong mind is apt to obtain over a weak one. Horace Walpole, in his Reminiscences, tells us, that the king used to call her, "Cette diablesse, madame la princesse!"

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

by the caresses of the Queen of Prussia, these soon vanished. Shortly after the return of the king and queen to Berlin, George the First paid them a visit at Charlottenburg, a palace within a few miles of that city. The day of his arrival there, at the end of dinner, he was seized with a fit of apoplexy. The queen wished to persuade him to quit the table; but they made civilities to one another for a long time: at last she got up and went away. The King of England began to reel on his chair: the King of Prussia ran to his assistance, and every body pressed forward to support him, but in vain; he fell down on his knees, and his wig went one way, and his hat the other. They laid him down softly on the ground, where he remained for more than an hour in a state of inanition. The care that was taken of him brought him back at last to himself. All this time the king and queen were in a state of despair.* From this attack the King of England recovered so speedily, that he was enabled to take a part in all the entertainments which were subsequently given in honour of his arrival. During his residence with his daughter and son-in-law a treaty of alliance between them, of which the double marriage formed a prominent feature, was concluded and signed; im-

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

mediately after which event the King of England returned to Hanover, and "his manner of taking leave of his family was as cold as his first reception of them had been."*

Shortly after the departure of George the First, the Queen of Prussia was brought to bed of a daughter; and so suddenly, that, there being no other assistance at hand, the king was obliged to act as midwife upon the occasion. This princess was the unhappy Amelia, whose subsequent life and misfortunes are so well known.

At the end of this year the King of Prussia paid another visit to his father-in-law at his country palace of Goher, near Hanover. Grumkow went with him, and, if we may believe the Princess of Bareith, employed himself most infamously during this expedition, in exciting the jealous feelings of the king against his wife; wishing to diminish her credit and influence, and thereby to increase his own. The consequence was a dreadful scene. "The king, at the end of a fortnight, returned to Berlin in a fury. He received his children kindly, but refused to see the queen. He went through her bedchamber, in order to go to supper, without speaking to her. The queen, and we all, were in the most cruel state of uneasiness on account

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

of this proceeding. She spoke to him at length, and expressed to him, in the mildest and most affectionate terms, her unhappiness at his manner of acting towards her. He only answered her by abuse and reproaches on her pretended infidelity; and if Madame de Kamken had not persuaded him to go away, his passion would perhaps have led him to some dreadful act of violence. The following day he assembled the court physicians. Holtzendorf the surgeon-major of his regiment, and Madame de Kamken, for the purpose of examining into the conduct of the queen. They all took the part of that princess violently. Madame de Kamken even treated the king himself very harshly, and showed him the injustice of his suspicions. In fact the virtue of the queen was without reproach, and the blackest calumny has never been able to say any thing against it. The king returned to his senses; begged pardon of the queen with many tears, which showed the goodness of his heart; and peace was re-established." *

Early in the following year George the First paid another visit to Hanover. The King and Queen of Prussia did not fail to meet him there, and to renew the discussion of the double marriage. This was now considered as certain; but

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

the execution of it was deferred for the present, as well on account of the extreme youth of the parties, as from the necessity that existed of laying the proposition before the English parliament. After a short stay at Hanover, the King of Prussia returned to Berlin; but the queen remained some months longer with her father. Frederic William had permitted her to do so, hoping, that by the influence of her presence, she might be enabled to get rid of the delays before stated respecting the marriages; especially with regard to that of the Princess Wilhelmina with the Duke of Gloucester, which he was particularly anxious should take place this year. Finding, upon her return to Berlin, that she had not been able to effect these objects, he quarrelled violently with her, had all the communications between her apartment and his shut up, and refused to see or be reconciled to her for near six weeks.* From this circumstance we may form some idea, not only of the violence, but also of the unreasonableness of the temper of Frederic William.

In the beginning of the year 1726 another prince was born to the royal house of Prussia, who was named Henry, and who became afterwards so celebrated in the history of his country.

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

At this time the young Frederic, who was now arrived at the age of fourteen, is thus described by the Princess of Bareith: "He was the most amiable prince possible; handsome and well made. His intellect was superior to his age; and he possessed all the qualities which can compose a perfect prince." * Such merits, it might be supposed, would have inspired his father with affection for him; yet it is just at this time that we first find mention made of his growing dislike to him. The origin of this unnatural feeling is not exactly known, but the fact is mentioned by his sister in her Memoirs †, and is most fully confirmed by subsequent events. It was probably increased, if not occasioned, by the dissimilarity of the pursuits of the father and son, which, as Frederic grew up, became more and more apparent every day. Among other causes of complaint which excited the anger of Frederic William against his son, none did so more than the taste of the latter for dress and fine clothes, (a taste which, however, early left him, and gave place to an extreme of negligence rarely equalled,) which, joined to his love of music and French literature, occasioned his father to say of him, with expressions of the greatest contempt, "He is nothing but a coxcomb and a

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Ibid.

French wit, who will ruin all that I have done."*

The following anecdote will explain, as well as justify, the terror in which Frederic lived, lest his father should at any time discover him occupied in his favourite pursuits. Quanz, a celebrated flute-player of that time, came to Berlin in the suite of Augustus King of Poland, and was accustomed to come to the prince, at the hours when the king was known to be otherwise engaged, for the purpose of accompanying him. On these occasions Frederic used to gratify his love of dress, by taking off his uniform, and putting on a coat of gold brocade, with his hair dressed in the French fashion, and tied in a bag behind; and he insisted upon Quanz being attired in a similar manner. On one occasion Frederic William arrived unexpectedly, upon which Quanz hid himself in the chimney, the flutes and music were thrown aside, and Frederic hastily re-assumed his uniform. Thus far all remained undiscovered; but the unfortunate bag, which Frederic had not had time to take off, soon betrayed to the king that something extraordinary had been happening. He searched the room, found the brocade coat and the music,

* "Ce n'est qu'un petit-maître et un bel-esprit Français, qui me gâtera toute ma besogne."—Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

and had them instantly burnt; some French books, which he also discovered, he ordered to be sent back to the bookseller; and again forbid his son, upon pain of his highest displeasure, either to instruct his mind or to adorn his person. Quanz, fortunately for himself, remained undiscovered in the chimney.*

The Princess of Bareith attributes much of the hostile feeling of Frederic William towards his eldest son, to the insinuations of the Count Seckendorff, the Austrian envoy at the court of Berlin; who having instructions from his court to endeavour to break off the projected double alliance between the royal family of England and that of Prussia, imagined that sowing dissensions among the latter would be one of the most effectual means of obtaining this object.† The intrigues of Seckendorff had the effect of delaying these marriages; and the death of George the First, which happened at this time, put a final end to the negotiations upon the subject. George the Second appears never to have given in to the idea; though his sister, the Queen of Prussia, whose darling object in life seems to have been the marrying her daughter to her nephew, continued to indulge in groundless hopes and expectations for some years longer.

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Fórster.

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

The predominant feeling in the breast of this princess was her attachment to the house of Hanover; and the next after that was her love for her eldest son, which was repaid by him with the sincerest affection, and the most constant and unceasing respect. Her conduct through life was exemplary in the midst of hardships, privations, and ill-treatment on the part of her brutal husband.* To the advantages of a good figure, a handsome face, and great dignity of carriage and manner, she united a cultivated mind, distinguished for its habitual good and sound sense, though tinctured with a certain degree of the pride and haughtiness, which were then the attributes of her race. She lived to the age of eighty, and in her old age became so enormously fat, that chairs of an extraordinary size were obliged to be constructed for her use.†

The great object of the Austrian court was, to detach that of Prussia from the strict and intimate alliance, which the circumstances of relationship, religion, and common interest had occasioned between it and Great Britain.‡ Hence arose the intrigues which have been

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith. Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† Lettres et Mémoires du Baron de Pöllnitz.

‡ Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

just alluded to, for the purpose of preventing the double marriage, and some others which occurred shortly afterwards.* In order to the better understanding of the latter, it will be necessary to give some idea of the alliances existing in Europe at the period we are now treating of.

In 1725 the emperor had made a secret treaty of commerce with Spain, (to which Russia afterwards acceded,) in favour of his new trading establishments at Ostend; one of the articles of which was an engagement on his part to compel the restoration of Gibraltar and Port Mahon, then in the possession of the English, to the Spaniards.† The maritime powers soon discovered the plans of Austria, and, in order to prevent their success, concluded a defensive alliance with one another, in which Prussia was included. The court of Vienna, terrified at this league, which they had not power to resist openly, determined upon endeavouring to dissolve it by means of intrigues. In furtherance of this purpose the Count Seckendorff, who was previously well known to Grumkow, the King of Prussia's prime minister, was sent to Berlin, with orders to leave no means untried to gain influence over the king, and to lead him to a

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

coincidence with the views and designs of the Austrian cabinet. The character of this envoy, if we may trust the delineation of it given by the great Frederic, was "sordid and venal: his manners were vulgar and uncultivated. Falsehood was become so habitual to him, that he had lost the power of speaking the truth. His soul was that of an usurer, which passed sometimes into the body of a soldier, sometimes into that of a negotiator."* Seckendorff arrived at Berlin loaded with Spanish gold, which he distributed with profusion: and that poor and venal court was immediately at his disposal. He attached himself forthwith to Grumkow, who became the confederate of all his schemes. The king, who had formerly known him during the war of Flanders, at the siege of Tournay and at the battle of Malplaquet, a circumstance which of itself was sufficient to inspire him with favourable impressions of his character, and who now found in him a boon companion of his drunken orgies, soon granted him his confidence; and eventually allowed his judgment to be entirely directed by him, and his accomplice Grumkow.

Frederic William had also been greatly propitiated by a present from the emperor of a company of gigantic soldiers, who followed in the

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

train of Seckendorff; and who arrived most opportunely for the Austrian interests, just at the moment when Frederic William was engaged in quarrelling with the new King of England, George the Second, on account of a demand made by the latter for the immediate restitution of some tall Hanoverians, who had been kidnapped by a Prussian pressgang. The success of the intrigues of Seckendorff and Grumkow in preventing the double marriage, has been already related, and we have seen that the means employed by them to effect their end were of the least justifiable kind. The next step taken by the confederates was a negotiation with the court of Dresden, always devoted to that of Vienna, for a marriage between the Princess Royal of Prussia, and Augustus the Second, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony. If they could accomplish this, a double benefit was obtained, -- the queen's English views were put an end to, and the king was more strongly rivetted to the Austrian alliance.

The health of Frederic William was beginning to give way under his constant debauches in the use of wine; and about this time he fell into a sort of hypochondriac malady, which took a religious turn.* He had always been very exact in his devotions, in attending churches, com-

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

municating, &c. He now redoubled these practices; forbid his family to talk upon any subject but religion, and read them daily sermons; after which one of his valets gave out a psalm, which the whole family were compelled to sing; and the slightest inattention to these exercises was punished with brutal severity. As his disorder increased, he began to talk of abdicating the throne in favour of his son, and of retiring with his wife and children, upon a pension of ten thousand crowns, to one of his country palaces, called Vousterhausen. "There," said he, "I shall pray to God, and take care of my farm; while my wife and daughters will manage the household affairs. You* (to his eldest daughter), who are clever, shall have the inspection of the linen, which you will make up, and of the washing; Frederica†, who is avaricious, shall take care of the provisions; Charlotte‡ shall go to market to buy us food; and my wife will manage the little ones and the kitchen."§ This sort of insanity went so far, that Seckendorff and Grumkow became alarmed; and, in order to dissipate the king's melancholy, as well as to promote their other plans, they persuaded him to pay a visit to the King of Poland at Dresden.

* Afterwards Margravine of Bareith.
† Afterwards Margravine of Anspach.
‡ Afterwards Duchess of Brunswick.
§ Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

Accordingly, in the month of January 1728, Frederic William made this journey, accompanied by his son, the young Frederic, then sixteen years of age, whom, from the dislike he already felt towards him, he was with much difficulty persuaded to take with him. The description of the court of Augustus the Second at this period, is thus given by the pen of a contemporary writer:—"This court was then the most brilliant in Germany. Magnificence was there carried to excess: all the pleasures reigned in it. It might properly have been called the island of Cythera. The women there were very pleasing, and the courtiers very polite. The king had a sort of seraglio of the most beautiful women of the country. When he died, it was calculated that he had had 354 children by his mistresses. All his court followed his example: the air breathed nothing but luxury; and Bacchus and Venus were the two divinities in fashion." * The person of the King of Poland is thus described: — "This prince, who was then fifty years old, was majestic in his carriage and countenance. An affable and polite manner accompanied all his movements and actions. His dreadful debauches had occasioned an accident to his right foot, which prevented his walking or standing for any length of time. It had been

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

already gangrened, and they had only saved his foot by amputating two of his toes: the wound had never healed, and he suffered prodigiously from it." *

The pleasures of the court of Augustus soon removed the melancholy of the King of Prussia; and while the two sovereigns passed their time in amusements by day, and in drunken orgies by night, their respective ministers arranged a treaty between them, one of the articles of which was the marriage of the King of Poland with the Princess Royal of Prussia; which was subsequently prevented from taking effect by the refusal of the Prince of Saxony, afterwards Augustus the Third, to ratify and guarantee the marriage articles. As illustrative of the manners of what was then considered the most polished court in Germany, an anecdote of a scene which took place at Dresden during the visit of Frederic William, and which is related by the Margravine of Bareith, may be worth mentioning; and, considering the nature of it, it will perhaps be best to give it in the very words of that princess:—"One evening when they had sacrificed largely to Bacchus, the King of Poland conducted the king (of Prussia), without his being aware of it, into a richly decorated bed-chamber, of which the furniture and arrangement were

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

both in exquisite taste. The king, charmed with what he saw, stopped to look round him, when suddenly a curtain was drawn up, which discovered to him a most extraordinary sight,—a young girl, in the state of our first parents, negligently reclining on a bed. She was more beautiful than the representations of Venus and the Graces, and offered to the view a form of ivory whiter than snow, and more finely formed than that of the statue of the Venus de Medicis at Florence. The cabinet which contained this treasure was lighted with so many wax candles, that their brightness was dazzling, and gave an additional brilliancy to the charms of this goddess. The authors of this comedy were in hopes that this object would make a great impression on the mind of the king, but it turned out quite otherwise. Scarcely had he cast his eyes upon this beautiful creature, than he turned away with indignation; and seeing my brother behind him, he pushed him violently out of the room, and then followed him immediately, in great anger at the scene which had just passed. He spoke of it that very evening in very strong terms to Grumkow, and declared that if any thing of the kind happened again, he would leave Dresden immediately." *

The King of Poland had been persuaded to

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

this indecent and unworthy exhibition by Grumkow and Seckendorff, who hoped, by inducing Frederic William to take a mistress, to destroy the influence of the queen. Never were people more completely wrong in their calculations and expectations than these ministers; for of the few virtues practised by Frederic William, the one upon which he piqued himself the most, was his unshaken conjugal fidelity. The conclusion of the anecdote is as curious as the commencement. The young Frederic, "in spite of the king's haste in driving him out of the room, had had full leisure to contemplate the Venus of the cabinet, who did not inspire him with so much horror, as she had caused his father." He became enamoured of her, and obtained her from the King of Poland, as the price of his abstaining from a continuation of the attentions he had before shown to the Countess Orzelska, the king's natural daughter, with whom *her father* was desperately in love, in which pursuit he had for his rival *her brother* and *his son* the Count Rodofski.*

Shortly after the return of Frederic William from Dresden, his visit was returned by the King of Poland; and their friendship was farther cemented by a renewal of the orgies which, at

* See Memoirs of the Margravine of Bareith.—What a complicated and dreadful picture of profligacy does this single sentence convey to our minds!

Dresden, had celebrated its commencement. The consequence of all these dissipations to the young Frederic was, that their cessation, which of course took place as soon as the king of Poland left Berlin, caused a void in his life which nothing could fill up. The monotonous existence of Potsdam, joined to his father's ill-treatment, threw him into a state of melancholy, which seemed likely to undermine his health; and when the king was told of his son's danger, and of the slow fever that consumed him, he only talked of him with greater contempt than before, and treated him more harshly. After some time Frederic recovered his health, though his condition in regard to his father did not improve; for at the end of this year (1728) we find, that the king treated him in the most cruel manner possible. The poor prince was not allowed the least recreation: music, reading, the sciences, and the fine arts, were so many crimes which were forbidden to him. No one dared to speak to him: scarcely could he venture to come to the queen; and he led the most melancholy life that can be conceived. In spite, however, of the king's prohibition, he applied himself to the study of the sciences, and made great progress in them: but the state of abandonment in which he lived, and the examples he had witnessed at Dresden, caused him to fall into habits of profligacy.*

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

The commencement of the year 1729 was marked by an increase of cruelty on the part of Frederic William, towards the princess royal and his son. The debauches he had indulged in, in company with the King of Poland, had left him the legacy of a violent fit of the gout; the pain of which, added to his natural violence of disposition, rendered his temper absolutely insupportable. The princess says, "The pains of purgatory could not equal those that we * endured. We were obliged to appear at nine o'clock in the morning in his room: we dined there, and did not dare to leave it even for a moment. Every day was passed by the king in invectives against my brother and myself. He no longer called me any thing but 'the English blackguard,' and my brother was named 'the rascal Fritz.'† He obliged us to eat and drink the things for which we had an aversion, or which were bad for our healths, which caused us sometimes to bring up in his presence all that was in our stomachs. Every day was marked by some sinister event; and it was impossible to raise one's eyes, without seeing some unhappy people tormented in one way or other. The king's restlessness did not suffer him to remain in bed: he had himself placed in a chair on rollers, and

* Meaning herself and her brother Frederic.

† "La canaille Anglaise."—"Le coquin de Fritz."

was thus dragged all over the palace: his two arms rested upon crutches, which supported them. We always followed this triumphal car, like unhappy captives who are about to undergo their sentence." *

"He sent us away one morning, when we entered to pay our court to him. 'Get along,' said he, in a violent manner, to the queen, 'with all your accursed children: I wish to be alone.' The queen endeavoured to reply, but he obliged her to be silent, and ordered the dinner to be served in her room. The queen was uneasy at this, and my brother and myself were charmed, for we were become as lean as hack-horses, from mere want of food. But scarcely were we sat down to dinner, when one of the king's servants arrived breathless, and crying out to the queen, 'For God's sake, madam, come as quickly as you can, for the king is trying to strangle himself.' The queen ran immediately to the king's apartment, much frightened. She found that he had put a cord round his neck, and would have strangled himself, had she not come to his assistance. He was delirious, and in a high fever, which, however, diminished towards the evening, when he found himself rather better."

This delighted us all, from the hope that his temper would be improved; but it turned out

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

quite otherwise. He related at supper to the queen, that he had received letters from Anspach, which mentioned, that the young margrave expected to be at Berlin in May, to marry my sister, and that he would send Mr. Bremer, his governor, to be the bearer of the ring of promise. He asked my sister if that pleased her, and how she would manage her house, when she was married. My sister was upon the footing with him to tell him whatever she thought, and even home truths, without offending him. She therefore answered him, with her usual frankness, that she would have an excellent table, always well served; and she added, 'which shall be a better one than yours; and if I have children, I will not ill-treat them as you do, nor force them to eat things, that are unpleasant to them.' 'What do you mean by that?' replied the king, 'and what is wanting to my table?' 'There is this wanting,' said she, 'that one cannot get enough to eat at it; and that the little there is at it consists only of coarse vegetables, which we cannot bear.' The king had begun to be angry at her first answer; this last completed the thing, and put him in a fury; but all his wrath fell upon my brother and myself. He first threw a plate at my brother's head, who escaped the blow, and then another at me, which I also avoided. A volley of invectives followed these first hostilities."

"He flew into a passion with the queen, reproaching her with the bad education she gave to her children; and addressing himself to my brother, 'You ought to curse your mother,' said he, 'for she is the cause that you are so ill-conducted. I had a preceptor,' continued the king, 'who was a good man. I remember always a story he related to me in my youth. He told me that there was once a man at Carthage who had been condemned to death for many crimes he had committed. He asked permission to speak to his mother when they were leading him to execution. They allowed her to come to him. He approached her as if to whisper something to her, and bit off a piece of her ear with his teeth. I treat you thus, said he to his mother, to make you an example to all parents who do not take care to bring up their children in the ways of virtue. — Make the application of this,' continued he addressing himself always to my brother; and seeing that he did not answer, he began again abusing us, till he was no longer able to utter. We rose from table; and as we were obliged to pass by him, he aimed a great blow at me with his crutch, which I happily escaped, or he would have knocked me down. He pursued me for some time in his chair, but those who drew him along gave me the time to escape into the queen's apartments."*

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

Among the occupations of Frederic William, during his fits of the gout, painting in oils must not be omitted — an art which he was also accustomed sometimes to practise during the long afternoons, which succeeded his early dinners.* For the most part one of his own grenadiers was the model, from which he copied; and when the portrait had more or less colour in it than the original, or was not as the king thought sufficiently resembling, he was in the habit of colouring the cheeks of the soldier to correspond with the picture. At other times, when painting, he would fall asleep; and while in this situation it not unfrequently happened, that the brush, in falling, trailed along the canvass and disfigured it. When he awoke he attributed this to a painter, whom he kept in the room with him to mix his colours, and who he said had done it from jealousy of his talent. On these occasions, the sitting concluded with the caning of the poor painter. Enchanted with the fruits of his genius, he showed them to his courtiers, and asked their opinion concerning them: but as he would have been very angry with any one who had criticized them, he was quite sure of being gratified with admiration. "Well," said he one day to an attendant who was extolling the beauties of one of his pic-

* Vie de Frederic II.

tures, "how much do you think that picture would bring at a sale?"—"Sire, it would be cheap at a hundred ducats."—"You shall have it for fifty," said the king, "because you are a good judge, and I am therefore anxious to do you a favour." The poor courtier, obliged to become the possessor of this miserable performance, and to pay so dear for it, determined for the future to be more circumspect in his admiration. On some of his pictures he wrote the following inscription, in commemoration of his state of bodily health when he painted them, "Fridericus Wilhelmus in tormentis pinxit." Thiebault relates that he himself had seen, at the house of Prince Henry of Prussia, one of his productions, representing himself smoking, surrounded by his generals. This picture he describes, to have been exceedingly ill painted; but still preserving a certain degree of resemblance in the portraits.*

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

CHAPTER III.

FREDERIC'S GOVERNORS DISMISSED, AND OTHERS APPOINTED. — INTIMACY OF FREDERIC WITH KEITH AND KATT. — FREDERIC WILLIAM ILL. — HIS SECOND DAUGHTER MARRIES THE MARGRAVE OF ANSPACH. — THE KING'S ILL-TREATMENT OF HIS FAMILY RECOMMENCES. — FREDERIC DETERMINES TO MAKE HIS ESCAPE. — FREDERIC WILLIAM GOES TO DRESDEN. — VIOLENT SCENE BETWEEN HIM AND FREDERIC AT POTSDAM. — FREDERIC AGAIN DETERMINES ON FLIGHT. — HIS FATHER DISCOVERS HIS INTENTION. — FREDERIC TREATED AS A STATE-CRIMINAL. — HE ENDEAVOURS AGAIN TO ESCAPE. — HIS SITUATION MUCH COMPASSIONATED BY THE ARMY. — UNSUCCESSFUL PLANS OF SEVERAL OFFICERS TO DELIVER HIM.

THE governors of Frederic, the Count Finkenstein and Colonel Kalkstein, were dismissed about this time, upon the plea that the prince was now eighteen years of age; and in their stead Colonel Rocho and Major Keyserling were placed about his person in the capacity of companions. The Princess of Bareith attributes this change to the intrigues of Grumkow and Seckendorff, who, continuing fearful of a renewal of the English alliance and of the proposals for the double marriage, wished to increase and perpetuate the dissensions of the royal family. They always hoped, by encouraging the king in his severities towards his son,

whom they knew to be entirely in the English interest, to oblige the latter to some violent resolution, which might render the breach between him and his father irreconcileable. The Count Finkenstein had a certain authority of governor over his pupil, who besides respected the unshaken probity of his character, and he would therefore probably have been able to prevent the prince from taking steps which might be prejudicial to him; whereas the persons who were now put about him would be neither likely, from character nor situation, to oppose any of his wishes or designs. Rocho being a good sort of man, without talent; and Kaiserling, young, thoughtless, and inexperienced. The latter, however, was lively and agreeable, and became and always continued an intimate friend of Frederic.

About this time also commenced the intimacy of Frederic with Keith and Katt, two young men about the court; the former one of the king's pages; the latter an officer in the army, son of the General Katt, and grandson of the Marshal de Wartensleben. Keith, too, was the minister of Frederic's debauches, and so much in his favour that he loved him passionately, and gave him his entire confidence. Katt appears to have gained the friendship of the prince by similar means.*

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

month of May of this year, contributed. It was a marriage much beneath what this princess might have pretended to, but Frederic William loved such alliances; first, because they were at hand, and brought about without trouble, and thus his daughters were taken off his hands at an early age; and, secondly, because to these little princes the honour of obtaining a princess of Prussia was sufficient; whereas great sovereigns would have required a more considerable dower than the avaricious habits of Frederic William permitted him to give. But this improvement of temper was of short duration; indeed the propensity to ill-treat his eldest son and daughter seems to have been inherent in the nature of Frederic William. Like the diversion of killing flies which employed the leisure hours of the Roman emperor, it appears to have been the amusement to which he constantly recurred when he had nothing else to do.

Accordingly, in the Princess of Bareith's Memoirs, we find her almost immediately recurring to the same subject, with new details of barbarity on the part of Frederic William. "The king almost caused my brother and myself to die of hunger. He always acted as carver, and served everybody except us; and when by chance there remained any thing in a dish, he spit into it, in order to prevent our eating of it. We lived entirely upon coffee and

milk and dried cherries, which quite ruined my digestion. In return, I was nourished with insults and invectives, for I was abused all day long, in every possible manner, and before everybody. The king's anger went so far against my brother and myself, that he drove us from him, forbidding us to appear in his presence except at meals."* The queen, without intending it, increased the king's ill-humour, by her constant intrigues for the renewal of the English marriage. Her plans she confided to Madame Ramen, one of her women of the bed-chamber, who to a bad character united a malicious disposition. The Ramen betrayed the secrets of the queen to Eversmann, with whom she was very intimate, and who, from having been porter at the gate of the palace at Berlin, had become a sort of favourite of the king. Eversmann, being gained over by Seckendorff, Grumkow, and the imperial party, related in aggravated colours all he heard from the Ramen to the king, and thus the anger of Frederic William was perpetually rekindled against his wife and daughter.

Upon one of these occasions, when his wrath was at the highest, the following scene, as related by the princess, took place: — "The queen had contrived in her bed-room a sort of labyrinth of skreens, so arranged that I could escape the

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

king, without being seen, in case he entered suddenly. The wicked Ramen, who, like the devil, never slept, wished to amuse herself at my expence, and deranged my retreat, without my observing it. The king came, and surprised us; I wished to escape, but found myself unhappily embarrassed among these skreens, of which several fell, and prevented my getting out of the room. The king was at my heels, and tried to catch hold of me, in order to beat me. Not being able any longer to escape him, I placed myself behind my governess. The king advanced so much that she was obliged to retire, but finding herself at length near the chimney, she was stopped. I was always behind Madame de Sonsfeld, and found myself in the alternative of either bearing the fire or blows. The king leant his head upon the shoulder of Madame de Sonsfield, overwhelming me with abuse, and trying to seize me by the hair. I was on the ground, and half burnt. This scene would have had a tragical end if it had continued, as my clothes were actually beginning to take fire. The king, fatigued with crying out, and with his passion, at length put an end to it, and went away." *

As for Frederic, he was treated every day with additional harshness. "The king never now saw

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

my brother," continues the princess, "without threatening him with his cane. The latter told me constantly, he would bear any thing from the king except blows, but that if he ever came to such extremities with him, he would regain his freedom by flight."* Such a state of things as this could never long continue, with a father so completely the slave of his own passions, and a son who was determined not to bear the effects of them beyond a certain point. Accordingly, we find that, towards the close of this year, the event anticipated by Frederic with so much dread had taken place, which was communicated by him to his mother in the following note. "I am in the deepest despair: what I had always so much dreaded has at length happened to me. The king has entirely forgotten that I am his son, and has treated me like the lowest of mankind. I entered his bed-chamber this morning as usual: as soon as he saw me he seized me by the collar, at the same time striking me with his cane in the most cruel manner possible. I tried in vain to defend myself: he was in so terrible a fury, that he was not the least master of himself, and it was only from mere lassitude that he at last concluded. My patience is at length worn out. I have too high a sense of honour to endure such treatment; and I am

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

resolved to put an end to it in one way or other."*

Nor was it only upon the person of Frederic that his father exercised these severities; they extended equally to those who were in any way connected with him, or supposed to be attached to him. Frederic, as has been before mentioned, was passionately fond of music, and not being able to indulge in it within the walls of the palace, as well from fear of his father, as from not having any one to accompany him, he had made acquaintance with a citizen of Potsdam, whose daughter was a tolerable player upon the harpsichord. Frederic was accustomed to go to the house of this citizen for the sole purpose of practising music with the daughter. She was ugly and respectable, and perpetually under the eyes of her parents; and of love, therefore, there was never any question between them, nor was it likely that there should. It is, therefore, impossible that Frederic William, when apprized of the circumstances of the case, could have thought that there was any danger of this kind in the connexion, though such was the pretext put forward by him to commit an act of brutal injustice, which would have been worthy of the worst sovereigns of the most despotic dynasties

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

in either ancient or modern history. It is impossible not to perceive that the real reason of his conduct was his enmity to his son; and that the crime of the poor girl was, the having assisted in making that son's existence more supportable. He caused the girl to be taken from her parents, and delivered to the executioner, by whom she was publicly whipped through the different parts of the town. The intention of Frederic William apparently being, that the infliction of so infamous a punishment in so public a manner should prevent the possibility of Frederic's ever seeing her again. Afterwards, when Frederic became king, he made enquiries respecting her, and finding she was married to a poor inhabitant of Berlin, he gave her a pension of one hundred and fifty rix-dollars.*

Driven to despair by such horrible severities, Frederic determined to make his escape, and to take refuge in England, where he hoped to marry the Princess Anne †, with whom he fan-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin. Voltaire, who is almost always incorrect, and frequently intentionally so, in his Memoirs, when on the subject of Frederic, mentions this anecdote, as if the girl had been Frederic's mistress, and says, the pension he allowed her was only seventy rix-dollars; but Thiebault, from whom the particulars in the text are taken, had certainly equal advantages with Voltaire for discovering the truth, and much greater inducements for telling it.

† Married in 1734 to William Charles Henry Prince of Nassau and Orange.

cied he was in love; partly from the persuasions of his mother, and partly from a sort of amorous correspondence which had gone on for some time between them. When the anger of Frederic William had been excited against England by Seckendorff, who received accounts from the Austrian minister in London of all that was said against the Prussian monarch at that court, and related it with aggravated circumstances, he forbid the continuance of this correspondence. The queen, in all other respects so submissive to her husband, was resolute in resisting him upon this point. She not only continued to correspond herself upon the subject of the double marriage, but encouraged her son and daughter to do so also; and as all her actions were watched, and her confidences betrayed, by the Ramen, the irritation and jealousy of the king was perpetually renewed and increased.

In February 1730, Frederic William went to Dresden, to confer with the King of Poland, and took the young Frederic with him, whose original intention had been to take this opportunity of making his escape; but having confided his plan to his sister, he was dissuaded by her entreaties and tears from putting it into effect. Accordingly he returned with the king to Potsdam, where shortly afterwards took place a more terrific scene between the father and

son than had as yet occurred; which is thus related by Frederic himself to his sister:—"As I entered," says he, "the king's room this morning, he first seized me by the hair, and then threw me on the ground, along which, after having exercised the vigour of his arm upon my unhappy person, he dragged me, in spite of all my resistance, to a neighbouring window; his intention apparently was to perform the office of the mutes of the seraglio, for seizing the cord belonging to the curtain, he placed it round my neck. I had fortunately for myself had the time to place myself upon my legs, and I seized hold of both his hands, and began to cry out. A servant came immediately to my assistance, and delivered me from his hands." He then adds, "I am daily exposed to similar dangers, and my miseries are so excessive and so desperate, that it is only violent remedies which can put an end to them."* Again Frederic formed a plan of evasion, and again he was dissuaded from it by his sister.

Shortly afterwards he accompanied his father to Radeberg, a village on the Elbe, where the King of Poland, attended by all his court, was encamped, with the intention of exhibiting to the King of Prussia the manœuvres of his army, consisting of 23,000 men. The magni-

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

ficence and luxury of the Court of Dresden were there exhibited to the best advantage; but the manœuvres appear to have found no favour in the eyes of the more experienced Prussian generals. Frederic says of them, "The manœuvres, which the King of Poland caused his army to execute, were an imitation of the Roman manner of fighting, mingled with the visions of the Chevalier Follard. The connoisseurs were of opinion that this camp was rather a dramatic exhibition than a real image of war." *

On the return of Frederic and his father to Potsdam, similar scenes to those which have been before related again commenced. In addition to his former ill-treatment, Frederic William had now conceived the idea of forcing his eldest son, by a mixture of severities and entreaties, to abandon formally his rights of primogeniture, and to sign an act renouncing his claim to the succession of the Prussian throne in favour of his next brother. For the accomplishment of this purpose Frederic was perpetually tormented, but in vain. To such propositions he would never listen, and was accustomed, when his father urged them, only to answer "declare my birth illegitimate, and I

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

give up the throne to my brother;"* well knowing that Frederic William would never consent to affix such a public stain upon the honour of his wife. Against these increasing and unmerited acts of injustice Frederic again finally determined to seek redress in flight; and, in moments of great irritation caused by his father's severity, he even mentioned his intention before his attendant Rocho, who was so alarmed at the bare idea of such a step, that he imprudently confided it in a deploring manner to various persons, from some of whom it naturally passed to those in the Austrian interest, who lost no time in informing the king of it.† Thus the general intention of Frederic to escape became known to his enemies: farther details upon the subject were discovered by other means.

It has been already mentioned that the correspondence of the queen, and of her son and daughter, with different members of the royal family of England never ceased, though repeatedly and peremptorily forbidden by Frederic William.‡ Of course every possible precaution to prevent the discovery of this clandestine intercourse was imagined and resorted to, and the plan adopted was for a time successful.

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

‡ Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

The letters from London were addressed to a merchant at Berlin, and were sent by a commercial house of the former city under cover to a respectable magistrate of the town of Nuremberg, who was directed to confide them to the post, and who was given to understand that the correspondence related exclusively to affairs of commerce. On their arrival at Berlin, the outer covers were opened by the merchant, who found the letters within addressed to one of the two aid-de-camps of Frederic, who were both in his confidence. The letters sent from Berlin followed exactly the same course; and the merchant, who addressed them to the magistrate of Nuremberg, was informed that they related to some private interests of the prince's aid-de-camps, who were anxious to obtain the advice and counsel of the magistrate.*

The correspondence thus managed had gone on for a considerable time without accident or discovery; but at length the suspicions of the Nuremberg magistrate were awakened: it struck him as impossible that commercial affairs, of which celerity of communication is generally supposed to be the life and soul, could be transacted with advantage by means of so slow and circuitous a correspondence as that which passed through his hands. From these suspicions he

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

was naturally led to the supposition that it was carried on for some secret and perhaps dangerous purpose; and his fears getting the better of all scruples, he at length opened one of the letters from Berlin. By a singular fatality this letter contained an account of Frederic's plan of escape: it was therein mentioned that it was to take place during a journey he was about to undertake with his father to Anspach, Frankfort, and Wesel, and that his friends and confidants Katt and Keith were to meet him in his flight, and accompany him to England. The magistrate's terror and perplexity at his unwelcome discovery may easily be conceived. In imagination he already saw the severe and arbitrary Frederic William vowing vengeance against him. In this dilemma there was but one chance of safety for himself, which accordingly he took; that of immediately sending the letter he had opened to the King of Prussia*, together with a full avowal of all he knew respecting the correspondence.

Frederic William preserved the most profound secrecy with regard to the intelligence he had received. The time arrived for the journey to Anspach: Frederic took leave of

* The accounts of this transaction differ, as to whether the magistrate sent his communication to the king direct, or to Grumkow: whichever really was the case, the effect of course was the same.

his sister, and, unlike the two former times when he had quitted her, assured her that he had entirely given up his intention of escaping, and that he should certainly return with his father.* Little did he then think how the latter part of his declaration was to be verified. The princess appears not to have believed his protestations, but to have passed the night after his departure in tears, from a sort of forewarning of what was to happen to him. In the meanwhile the king and his son proceeded on their journey.

The Princess of Bareith mentions that the first idea of Frederic had been to escape from Anspach, but that having confided his discontents to the margrave, the latter suspected his intention, and refused to give him horses.† After this failure, Frederic determined to put his plan into execution at a small village where they slept, between Anspach and Frankfort, and wrote to this effect to his friend Katt, who had continued at Berlin. By some unaccountable negligence he directed his letter wrong, and it was taken to another Katt, a cousin of the favourite of Frederic, who was in garrison near Berlin, and who, upon receiving it, immediately forwarded it to the king, by whom it was received at Frankfort. The prince and his suite slept in a barn

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith. † Ibid.

on straw. At midnight Frederic left his bed, as he imagined unperceived, but in fact watched by his valet-de-chambre, who was a spy of the king's, and who immediately upon his departure gave the alarm. He proceeded to a tree in the fields, where he expected to find his horses, which were to convey him across the Saxon frontier. The horses were purposely delayed for some time by the Prussian patroles, and then allowed to proceed to their destination; and the whole was so contrived, that at the moment the horses arrived, and as Frederic was going to mount, the patroles made their appearance. On seeing them, the prince hid his face in his hands, and allowed himself to be taken and led back to the village without saying a single word.*

It is evident that Frederic William already contemplated the possibility of getting rid of a son whom he hated, by means of judicial proceedings: hence, his not seeking to prevent, by private means, the intended escape; but suffering the prince's plan to go on far enough to occasion his being detected in the very act. He even still dissimulated his anger, hoping that Frederic would not abandon his purpose without further attempts, and that thus stronger evidence might be procured against him.† But

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

upon their arrival at Frankfort, where, as has been already mentioned, he received the letter which Frederic had written to Katt, his passion got the better of his prudence; and when Frederic came into his presence, he flew at him, and tried to strangle him. He was with difficulty prevented by the General Valdo from executing his purpose; nor was he separated from his son, till he had torn some handfuls of his hair up by the roots. He also struck him on the face with the head of his cane so violently that the blood gushed from his nose*, upon which Frederic cried out, in all the bitterness of despair, "The face of one of the house of Brandenburgh never suffered such an insult before."† The king then gave orders to General Valdo and Colonel Rocho to watch the motions of Frederic; and told them that their heads should answer for it, if the prince was not securely kept. From this moment, Frederic was treated as a state criminal; his sword was taken from him, and all his effects were seized by the king's order: fortunately for him, one of his servants had the presence of mind to burn his papers.‡ From Frankfort, part of the journey to Wesel was performed by water; and Valdo

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

† "Jamais un visage de Brandebourg n'a souffert un affront pareil."

‡ Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

and Rocho prevailed upon the king to allow his son to go in a separate boat from himself, fearful of the scenes, to which the latter's ungovernable passions might lead.

From Guelders, the rest of the journey was performed by land, the king preceding the prisoner and his guards. Frederic, by his entreaties, prevailed upon his keepers to allow him to enter Wesel by night; and when they arrived at the bridge of boats, which it was necessary to pass to arrive at the town, he solicited to be allowed to descend from the carriage, and walk into the town, to spare himself the shame of being recognized in his present condition. So slight a favour could hardly be refused, and accordingly his desire was granted; but no sooner did he find himself on his feet than he took to flight, running in the opposite direction from the town as hard as he was able. He was, however, again unsuccessful, as a strong guard, which had been sent by the king to meet him, overtook him, and brought him back. He was lodged at a house in the town, and the next morning he was brought before his father to be examined, who, upon this occasion, was attended only by the General Mosel. The king began in a furious tone to ask his son, why he had tried to desert: "Because," replied the prince, "you did not treat me like your son, but like an abject slave."—"You are a cowardly deserter, devoid

of all feelings of honour," said Frederic William. "I have as much honour as yourself," replied Frederic; "and I have only done that which I have heard you say a hundred times you would have done yourself, had you been treated as I have been." At this last answer the king's passion became ungovernable; he drew his sword, and tried to run his son through the body. Mosel, perceiving his design, threw himself before him, and cried out, "Sire, you may kill me, but spare your son." These words made an impression on the king, and restored him to a comparative degree of calmness.* The general then remonstrated with him strongly upon his violence, and besought him not to see his son any more, as the presence of the latter was sure to inflame his anger to so alarming a pitch. This advice Frederic William followed; and having staid only a short time at Wesel, he proceeded homewards, leaving orders that his son should, after four days' interval, follow him; and confiding the task of guarding him to the Colonel Rocho, and the Generals Valdo and Dosso.

Frederic, it appears, had still another chance of escape offered to him, but which, like the former ones, was unsuccessful. The situation of Frederic was much compassionated by the

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

army; and the cruel treatment he had received from the king excused, in the eyes of all, the steps he had taken. The violent dispositions of the king being known, fears were entertained for his life. Several officers, headed by the Colonel Groëbnitz, resolved at all risks to deliver him. They had already procured the dress of a female peasant, and cords to enable him to descend from the windows, when General Dosso deranged these projects by putting iron bars to them.* Another account states, that Frederic did actually get out of the window, but was seen and challenged in his descent to the ground by a sentinel, and obliged to return.† This last attempt having failed, the prince left Wesel at the appointed time, and was conducted, according to the king's instruction, to Mittenwalde, a village in the neighbourhood of Berlin, where he was to wait for further orders.

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Fórster

CHAPTER IV.

FREDERIC WILLIAM ORDERS THE ARREST OF KATT AND KEITH. — THE LATTER ESCAPES. — PUNISHMENT OF THE LIEUTENANT DE SPAEN. — CONSTERNATION OF THE QUEEN AND PRINCESS FREDERICA AT THE ARREST OF FREDERIC. — UNFEELING BEHAVIOUR OF THE KING TOWARDS THEM. — HIS UNWORTHY TREATMENT OF KATT. — FREDERIC INTERROGATED BY GRUMKOW, AND IMPRISONED AT CUSTRIN. — HIS LETTER TO HIS SISTER. — HE IS TRIED BY TWO COURTS-MARTIAL. — INTERFERENCE OF SECKENDORFF. — LETTERS OF THE EMPEROR OF GERMANY, AND THE KINGS OF POLAND AND SWEDEN, TO THE KING. — FREDERIC'S LETTER TO THE EMPEROR.

Shortly after Frederic's first arrest, that is to say, while he and his father were at Frankfort, the latter had dispatched messengers in different directions, with orders to arrest, wherever they might be found, his son's two accomplices, Katt and Keith.* The former, who had remained at Berlin, was warned by friends of the destiny that awaited him, and instantly prepared for flight; but having ordered a saddle so contrived as to conceal his money and papers, which was not ready, he determined to wait for it; and was consequently arrested, just as he was about to mount his horse, by the Marshal

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

Natzmar, who, either from regard for Katt, or from respect to Frederic, had delayed as long as possible the execution of the commands he had received. Keith was more fortunate. He was at Wesel while the king and his son were staying at Frankfort, and accidentally meeting a page of the Prince of Anhalt, who arrived there twenty-four hours before the royal party, he was made acquainted by him with the catastrophe which had occurred.* On receiving this intelligence he immediately left Wesel, and escaped to the Hague, where he took refuge in the house of the English ambassador, Lord Chesterfield. Frederic William, hearing of his flight, sent the Colonel Du Moulin after him, who demanded him of Lord Chesterfield, but the latter refused to give him up; and Du Moulin had the mortification of seeing him shortly afterwards traverse the town in the ambassador's carriage, and embark for England, from whence he passed into Portugal. Frederic William, unable to punish him in person, had him hung in effigy, and degraded his brother to the situation of sergeant in one of his regiments, as a punishment for having assisted Frederic in procuring the horses, on which he was to have escaped during their journey. After the accession of Frederic,

* The Princess of Bareith says she was informed by the queen, that the page was sent forward by the Prince of Anhalt on purpose to warn Keith of his danger.

he returned to Berlin, and was made a lieutenant-colonel in the Prussian service, and appointed to the office of curator to the Academy.*

Besides Katt and Keith, Frederic had another confidant, the Lieutenant De Spaen, an officer of the gens d'armes of the guard, who, however, does not seem to have possessed so much of his intimacy and friendship as the two former. He appears to have been generally aware of Frederic's intention to escape, but not of any of the particulars; and had been of great use to him in facilitating his meetings with Katt, when he was on guard at the palace at Potsdam. These things being discovered by the examination of Katt, Spaen was immediately arrested, and, without even the form of a trial, was expelled the army, and condemned by the king to a year's confinement at Spandau. At the end of that year he went to Holland, and entered the Dutch service, in which he attained to the rank of major-general, and died at his house near Cleves in 1768. In 1763, in a journey made by Frederic to that country, he lodged at his house. The king was very cordial with him, and seemed particularly to delight in talking to him of his younger days; but never alluded in any way to the transactions of the year 1730, which made the General Spaen remark,

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

that " his majesty had an admirable memory as far as the year 1730."

While these things were passing at Frankfort, the Queen of Prussia at Berlin, unconscious of the calamity which had befallen her son, was amusing herself during the absence of her husband by giving a ball at Monbijou, a small palace so called, belonging to her, and situated near the town on the banks of the Spree.—The gaiety of this fête was suddenly interrupted by an express from Frederic William, which brought a letter to Sophia Dorothea, announcing the catastrophe, which had occurred, in the following terms: — " I have arrested the rascal Fritz: I shall treat him as his crime and his cowardice merit. I no longer acknowledge him as my son. He has dishonoured me and all my family. So great a wretch is no longer worthy to live."* The state of the queen and her daughter on receiving this paternal note may more easily be conceived than described; nor were their minds rendered more tranquil the next morning by hearing of the arrest of Katt, and the seizure of all his effects, among which they were well aware was a writing-box belonging to Frederic, and containing a large collection of their letters to him. What was to be done? They knew that if these letters were seen by the king, they

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

would increase his fury against his son, and extend its effects to themselves. In this dilemma the queen applied to her chaplain Reinbeck to go to the Marshal Natzmar, and endeavour to persuade him to deliver the important writing-case to her. Reinbeck was either ill, or affected to be so, and upon this ground declined accepting the commission. The queen and princess were now in despair, when a mysterious and unknown agency delivered into their hands what their own efforts had failed in obtaining for them. The writing-case in question was left at the house of the Countess Finck, who exercised a high charge about the queen's person, with an unsigned note, requesting her to convey it to her majesty, and announcing that it contained her letters and those of the princess to the prince royal. The countess, in her first terror at being entrusted with so dangerous and delicate a commission, was in doubt whether she should send the case and its contents to the king or the queen; but her doubts and scruples were soon over-ruled by the princess and her governess Madame de Sonsfeld, to whom she confided her dilemma; and after some demur the writing-case was conveyed to the queen's apartment.

This difficulty thus got over, it remained to be considered, first, how the box was to be opened without showing marks of violence,

and secondly, how the letters, once got at, were to be disposed of, and how they were to be replaced. It is to be remembered that one of the queen's attendants, Madame Ramen, was known to be a spy of the king's, in spite of which that princess was weak enough to put almost implicit confidence in her; and no representations, however strong or however convincing, could ever alter the mistaken good opinion she entertained of her. The queen, however, upon this occasion was made to understand the necessity of inviolable secrecy, and to promise it; and, adds the Princess of Bareith, "for this once she kept her word." At first, some difficulty occurred as to the manner of removing and replacing the seal, which united the cords with which the writing-case was bound; but it fortunately happened that a servant of the queen's had a similar one, which he had picked up about a month before in the gardens of Monbijou. This obstacle being overcome, the lock was soon picked, and about fifteen hundred letters of the queen and the princess, were taken out and burnt: many of these were full of abuse and ridicule of the king; others, again, treated of the secret intrigues with England; and there was among them the following note from Frederic to Katt, which shows the confidence the former had in the success of his scheme: — "I fly, my dear Katt. I have taken my measures so well that I have nothing to fear.

I shall go by Leipsic, where I shall call myself the Marquis d'Ambreville. I have already told all this to Keith, who will go straight to England. Do not lose any time, for I count upon finding you at Leipsic; and be of good courage." *

The work thus far accomplished, it remained to devise means for refilling the writing-case, which it was determined should be done by re-writing a great number of letters. The queen and the princess were employed in this work for three whole days, during which time they composed between six and seven hundred letters; and so careful were they of all the little circumstances which might lead to their detection, that it is mentioned by the princess, that only paper was employed bearing on it the date of each year, in which the different letters were supposed to be written. Still the writing-case was not full; but so terrified was the queen from the fear of being caught in the act of fabrication, that she would write no more; but insisted upon filling up the vacant space with trinkets and other articles. The case was then locked, and restored in appearance exactly to its original state.

It is probable that a part of the letters and papers found in the writing-case were not burnt upon this occasion, but were kept by the queen till the time of her death; at least Thiebault was

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

always informed that such was the case, and relates the following ancedote upon the subject. "When," says he, "this queen, in 1757, found herself near her end, she enveloped these letters in large sheets of paper, sealed with her seal and with black wax at all the joints where the sheets joined one another, addressed the precious packet to her son, and entrusted it to a person she had confidence in, under a promise of presenting it to the king whenever he should return to his kingdom. In 1763, Frederic, when he re-entered the palace at Berlin, passed into the small tower which forms a cabinet on the side of the old square, at the corner looking towards the great bridge: it was at this instant, when the king from thence cast his eyes over his capital, that his mother's orders were executed. Without doubt he was aware what the packet contained, for he did not even look at it, but contented himself with ordering it to be placed on the little table in the cabinet, where he left it during all the rest of his reign, without displacing or opening it. I myself saw it there in the same state in 1784, when I quitted Berlin."*

The evening after the fabrication of the letters had been completed, arrived Frederic William, and found the queen in his apartment ready to receive him. As soon as he saw her at the end of the suite of rooms, and long before he ar-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

rived in the one where she was, he cried out, "Your unworthy son is no more — he is dead." "What!" said the queen, "have you had the barbarity to kill him?"—"Yes;" replied the king; "but I must have his writing-case." For he had already informed himself that it was in the queen's possession. The queen brought it to him, and he immediately cut it in pieces, and took out the letters, with which he went away.* The unhappy Sophia Dorothea was almost out of her senses with grief, and could say nothing but, "Oh God! my son, my son!" She was, however, a little comforted by some of her attendants, who assured her that Frederic was still alive.

Presently the king came back, and his children took this opportunity of paying their respects to him. As soon as he saw his eldest daughter, he could no longer contain his passion; but cried out, "Infamous wretch, do you dare to show yourself before me! Go and keep your rascally brother company;"† saying which, he began to beat her violently, and proceeded to kick her out of a window of the room they were in, which opened to the floor: fortunately, the queen was in time to hold her back by her clothes, and succeeded, with the assistance of her governess, Madame de Sons-

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith. † Ibid.

feld, in rescuing her from the hands of her barbarous father; but there remained to the princess, as a memorial of this dreadful scene, a scar under the left breast; "which," says Voltaire, "she preserved all her life as a mark of the parental sentiments of a father towards her, and which she did me the honour to show me."* When the king found the princess no longer in his power, he redoubled his abuse of her; and accused her, among other things, of having intrigued with Katt, and having had several children by him. He now allowed that Frederic was still alive, but threatened, with the most horrible menaces, to put him to death; and said, he hoped now "to have evidence enough to convict the rascal Fritz and the *canaille* Wilhelmina, and to cut their heads off;" adding, "as for Fritz, he would always if he lived be a worthless fellow; and I have three other sons, who will all turn out much better than he has done."

The scene which was then taking place in the queen's apartment is thus described by the Princess of Bareith:—"The queen was screaming,—her firmness had abandoned her: she gnawed her own hands in despair, and ran wildly about the room. Rage so entirely disfigured the king's countenance, that he was fearful to look upon. My brothers and sisters,

* Mémoires de Voltaire par lui même. Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

of whom the youngest was not more than four years old, were at his knees, and tried to soften him with their tears. Madame de Sonsfeld supported my head, which was wounded and swelled with the blows I had received. It is possible to conceive a more affecting picture?"* Madame de Kamken, one of the queen's attendants, at length had the boldness to address Frederic William, and even to reprimand him for his conduct; representing to him at the same time, the injustice of his behaviour as regarded the queen, and the horror of the proceedings he meditated against his son. The king appears to have been struck with the firmness and good sense of her language; and instantly becoming more calm, he said to her, "You are very bold to hold such language to me, but I am not angry with you; your intentions are good; you speak to me with frankness, and that augments my esteem for you: go and tranquillize the queen." With these words he went away.

His next step was to assemble, in his apartment, Grumkow, Milius the auditor-general, and Gerber the fiscal-general; and to have Katt brought before them to be examined. As soon as he appeared, he fell at the king's feet, who, so far from being moved by this mark of submission, actually kicked and beat him while

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

on the ground; at the same time hitting him so many violent blows on the face, that the blood gushed from various parts of it. He then with his own hands tore from his breast the cross of the order of Saint John, which Katt wore.* This disgraceful scene was at length put an end to, and the interrogatory commenced. The unhappy Katt immediately owned all the circumstances of the prince's intended escape; but denied that he had any design, either against the person of the king, or against the state. He acknowledged the complicity of Keith, but denied that of the princess royal. His effects were then visited, but nothing was found in them which could criminate him. The letters of the queen and princess to Frederic were afterwards read by Grumkow, who, finding nothing of consequence in them, turned to the king in his disappointment, and had the insolence to say, "These women have made dupes of us; there is nothing in these letters which makes against them; and doubtless those which could have given us information are destroyed." The interrogatory finished, Katt was conducted back to prison, and the king returned to the queen, whom he told, apparently with a view of gaining, by this deception, information, that Katt had owned to the princess royal's being

* Vie de Frederic II.

in the conspiracy. He then added, "Tell your unworthy daughter that her room is to be her prison; I shall give orders to have the guard there doubled. I shall have her examined in the most rigorous manner, and will afterwards have her removed to some fit place, where she may repent of her crimes." Neither of these latter threats appear subsequently to have been put into execution.

In the meanwhile Frederic was suffering an interrogatory, at Mittenwalde, from Grumkow, the General Derscho, Milius, and Gerber. The Princess of Bareith mentions that the arrival of the latter occasioned a panic to her brother, for seeing him get out of the coach wrapped in a scarlet cloak, he took him for the executioner, who was come to administer the question to him.* They found him sitting upon an old chest, which he was obliged to make use of in consequence of there being no chairs in the room; and while he had been staying at Mittenwalde, the floor had been his only bed. The firmness and cheerfulness of his manner astonished Grumkow, who expressed his surprise, to which the prince answered, "I trust whatever happens to me, my spirit will always be found to be superior to my misfortunes."† When Grumkow made known to him

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

the king's desire, that he should be taken to Custrin, and confined there during pleasure, he said, "Well, let us go: but if requests on my part are necessary to regain my liberty, I shall, I think, stay there a long while." He went through his examination with calmness and patience; till Grumkow so far forgot what was due to the heir-apparent to the throne as, upon Frederic's refusing to give answers to some of the interrogatories, to threaten him with the question, upon which Frederic said, "An executioner such as you are always delights in talking of his trade; but I fear you not; I have confessed every thing; which, however, I now repent of, because I ought not to degrade myself by answering the questions of such a wretch as you are."

Among other questions put by Grumkow to Frederic was the following: "Why did you fly from the king, your father?"—"On account of his bad treatment of me."—"Where did you intend going?"—"To Algiers," was the sarcastic reply of Frederic; which being reported afterwards to Frederic William, served not a little to increase his exasperation against his son.* Upon this Grumkow advised him to abandon his pride, or he should find means to oblige him to do so. "I know not what you will do," answered the prince, "but I will never humble

* Vie de Frederic II.

myself before you." It is worthy of remark, that during the whole of the examination, Frederic, when named, was always called the "Colonel Fritz," and his sister, "Miss Wilhelmina," by the king's particular order.

The next day he was sent to the fortress of Custrin, where his servants were taken from him, as well as all his effects, except those upon his person.* To employ him, a bible and a few books of devotion were given him. His room was a sort of dungeon, receiving the light of day from a single small aperture; and in the evening, candles were allowed to him only for a short time. His expenses were regulated at sixpence farthing† of our money per diem.‡ His confinement was entirely solitary. It is impossible to conceive a young prince in a more desolate or unhappy situation, especially when it is considered, that the declared intentions of Frederic William with respect to his son, were of the most sanguinary description. Of this Frederic himself must have been perfectly aware, more particularly, as it was well known, that Frederic William had taken the opinions of the jurists of Leipsic on the general question, as to the justice of either disinheriting or putting to death a rebellious son.

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Twelve sous and a half of France.

‡ Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

About this time Frederic contrived to write a letter to his sister, which is given in her Memoirs, and which is curious, from showing the great affection that subsisted between them, as well as the constancy and cheerfulness with which the prince bore his misfortunes. The princess introduces it by saying, that it was delivered by an unknown person one evening to one of her women, who immediately brought it to her. It was written with a pencil, as at that time the use of pen and ink was denied to Frederic.

" My dear sister,

" They are going to disinherit me by a council of war, which is about to be held; for it requires nothing more to pass for a rebel than not to be, in every thing, of the opinion of the master: you may, therefore, understand, without difficulty, what is likely to happen to me. For myself, I do not care about the anathemas that may be pronounced against me, provided I know that my delightful sister gives her verdict in my favour. What a pleasure is it to me, that neither bolts nor bars can prevent me from testifying the perfect friendship I have for you. Yes, my dear sister, there are still some honest people in this most corrupted age, who procure me the necessary means to assure you of my attachment. Yes, my dear sister, provided I know that you are happy, my prison will become

the abode of happiness and contentment. 'Chi ha tempo ha vita:' let us console ourselves with this. I wish, from the bottom of my soul, that no interpreter was necessary to enable me to speak to you, and that we might see those happy days, when your *principe* and my *principessa* * might together make an agreeable harmony; or, to speak more plainly, when I might have the pleasure to converse with you in person, and to assure you that nothing in the world can diminish my affection for you. Adieu.

"THE PRISONER." †

The first idea of Frederic William was to deliver his son over to be condemned by the ordinary tribunals of Prussia, well knowing that his judges would never venture to decide, except according to his wishes. Indeed, he took a very summary, as well as a very certain mode of effecting this object; for, whenever their sentences were not approved by him, he was in the habit of going into the court where they sat, and there distributing kicks and blows to all the judges in turn, at the same time calling them

* *Note by the Princess.*—"My brother had given this name to his flute, saying, that he should never be really in love but with this princess. He often joked upon the subject in a way that made us both laugh. To keep up the allusion, I had named my lute *The Prince*, telling him that it was his rival."

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

"rogues and blackguards." From men so circumstanced, Frederic would have had no chance of acquittal. Grumkow, however, more calm and more acute than the king, saw in an instant that this being a proceeding where the eyes of all Europe would be upon the actors in it, it was necessary that at least the forms and outward appearance of justice should be kept up; and he therefore advised the king to have Frederic tried by a military commission for desertion, that being the only crime which could, with any degree of plausibility, be laid to his charge. *

A court-martial was accordingly assembled, over which presided the Prince of Anhalt, which was ordered to try the prince royal and the unhappy Katt. When the prince was brought before it, he immediately avowed his intention to escape; but said that what he had done proceeded from no bad motive, but only from a wish to travel and to instruct himself; and the court-martial, predetermined to save him, went into no farther evidence upon the subject, but unanimously acquitted him. One member alone of the court-martial, out of twenty-four, the Colonel Derschau, seemed to incline for the condemnation of Frederic, but he did not persist against the opinions of the rest. † Derschau lived to see Frederic

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Mirabeau, de la Monarchie Prussienne.

his sovereign, but the latter never showed the slightest symptom of recollection of his conduct upon this occasion. It is said that the Prince of Anhalt, whose character was as rough and violent as his master's, as soon as the time came for deciding upon the guilt or innocence of Frederic, stood up in his place, and declared he considered him innocent; and then, drawing his great sabre, swore he would cut off the ears of any man who should be of a contrary opinion.

The issue of this trial was of course most galling to the vengeful spirit of Frederic William, and he forthwith assembled another court-martial, which, more supple than the preceding one, without delay condemned Frederic to death; not however by a unanimous vote, as the Generals Denhoff and Linger were for pardoning the prince; and the former, in delivering his opinion, quoted the passage in the book of Kings, where David, being informed of the death of his rebellious son Absalom, cries out in the bitterness of his grief, "Oh! my son Absalom! my son, my son Absalom!"* — a quotation doubtless very proper to have an effect upon the members of the court-martial, though in fact there could be but little danger of Frederic William's ever suffering from the acuteness of his feelings, happen what might to any part of his family.

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

The king was now apparently arrived at the object of his unnatural wishes, having actually given orders for the decapitation of his son; when his course was suddenly arrested by the peremptory remonstrances of the emperor, through his minister Seckendorff; who thought that by thus saving the life of Frederic he should for ever attach him to the interests of the house of Austria. Seckendorff took upon himself to suppose orders, which he had not the time to wait for, and demanded, in the name of the emperor, an audience, which Frederic William did not dare to refuse him. There he announced, in the name of the chief of the empire, that it was to the empire itself that the Prince Frederic belonged; and, in consequence, he required the maintenance of the rights and laws of the Germanic body. He explained that it was to this body that his majesty was bound to deliver the accused, and the documents relative to his trial: finally, he declared that the person of his Royal Highness the Prince Frederic, heir-apparent to the throne of Prussia, was under the safeguard of the Germanic empire.* Shortly afterwards Seckendorff delivered to the king the following letter, written with the emperor's† own hand.

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† Charles VI.

"Your majesty is, I hope, so much convinced of the affection and friendship which I bear to you and to all your royal house, that you will not doubt how great a share I take in the vexation which the conduct of the prince royal has hitherto occasioned to you. I do not doubt but that there must have been very sufficient reasons to induce your majesty to proceed with so much severity against the prince royal. However, I cannot refrain, on account of the real friendship which exists between us, from interfering with your majesty in his favour; and requesting that you would rather lean to mercy than justice in an affair, which must come so near to the heart of your majesty. I seek in this nothing but what appears to me to tend to the tranquillity of your majesty, in which I am particularly interested: and I must hope, that by so great an extension of grace, the heart of the prince royal will be changed in such a manner that he will in future entertain no other intentions than those, which agree with your majesty's desires: and though he may, perhaps, not be as yet sufficiently convinced of the affection and love which I bear to you and to your royal house, it is still to be hoped that he will perceive by this friendly interference, which proceeds from the most sincere affection for your majesty and your family, how true and sincere are my intentions towards you. I do indeed believe

that the welfare of both houses depends upon their constant good understanding and connexion.* "I remain, &c."

"1st November 1730."

The Kings of Poland and Sweden had also written letters to Frederic William, interceding for his son. He was at first much incensed at these attempts at interference, and threatened to take his son into Prussia, and condemn him there; "where," said he, "under God, I am entirely absolute." At length, however, he was obliged to yield to the remonstrances of the emperor; but he did it with a bad grace; and exclaimed, while announcing that the life of Frederic was spared in consequence of the emperor's intercessions, "Austria will some day perceive what a serpent she warms in her bosom." An expression, to which subsequent events have given almost the dignity of prophecy.

The following was the answer of Frederic William to Charles the Sixth:—

"I thank your imperial majesty, and am much obliged to you for taking so great a share in the displeasure which my eldest son has caused to me by his conduct up to this time. I cannot deny that this goes so much the more deeply to my heart, because I have never been deficient in paternal admonitions and careful

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

education; notwithstanding which, every thing has been fruitless hitherto; which naturally has compelled me to proceed against him with becoming severity. I have, indeed, reason to wish to make him feel this still longer; so that he has solely to thank your imperial majesty, who has been pleased to interfere in his favour; since it is this alone which has induced me to pardon him. I will therefore hope, that this may make such an impression on his heart, that he may be thereby entirely changed, and may learn rightly to comprehend how much he is indebted to your imperial majesty for the sincere attachment and benevolence which you have shown to him. I, indeed, shall never forget the particular marks you have given me of your sincere and worthy friendship and confidence; but shall rather, with extreme exertion, always strive to give your imperial majesty, in return, true proofs of my esteem and devotion. I hope thus to show that nothing is dearer to me than to remain always united in constant intimacy and friendship with your imperial majesty and your arch-ducal house; and, in the hope that this may be always more and more confirmed, I remain, with a sincere German heart, and at the same time with all devotion, your imperial majesty's most friendly cousin and brother,

"FREDERIC WILLIAM."*

"Berlin, 20th Nov. 1730."

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

Frederic also wrote in the following terms to the emperor, to thank him for his most opportune interference :—

"Most beloved and most highly honoured cousin, &c.

"Your imperial majesty will, I trust, permit me to return to you, through these few lines, my very grateful thanks for your very powerful intercession in my behalf with the king my father. As I have to ascribe to this most benevolent interference of your imperial majesty the pardon, which I have obtained from my father, I shall all my lifetime strive, to the utmost of my power, to give your imperial majesty such sincere and convincing proofs of my dutiful and grateful devotion, and true German and patriotic zeal for your majesty and your arch-ducal house, that you may never be compelled, either now or in future, to withdraw from me your most valued affection. I have the honour to be, with all imaginable consideration, due to so great an emperor, and the most perfect esteem, unalterably, your imperial majesty's most obedient and most truly devoted cousin,

"FREDERIC." *

"Custrin, 5th Dec. 1730."

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

CHAPTER V.

FREDERIC CONTINUES IN CONFINEMENT. — KATT TRIED BY A COURT-MARTIAL: — HIS EXECUTION. — FREDERIC'S ILLNESS AND AFFLICTION. — FREDERIC'S PALLIATION OF HIS FATHER'S CONDUCT TOWARDS KATT. — FREDERIC WILLIAM ENDEAVOURS TO MAKE HIS SON RELIGIOUS: — HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH THE CHAPLAIN MÜLLER, WHO IS SENT TO FREDERIC. — EFFECT OF FREDERIC WILLIAM'S HARSH MANNER OF INCULCATING LESSONS OF DIVINITY ON HIS SON.

In the meanwhile Frederic continued always in rigorous confinement at Custrin, where a spectacle of the most dreadful kind was preparing for him. The unhappy Katt had been condemned by a court-martial, assembled for the purpose, to imprisonment for life; but this sentence did not please Frederic William, who foresaw that the end of his own reign would be the term of Katt's confinement. He therefore annulled the sentence, and, in the plenitude of his own arbitrary power, substituted the punishment of death in its stead; which circumstance he announced in the following singular letter, written with his own hand: —

"His majesty has read the report of the court-martial, which has been sent to him, and is very well contented with it in all respects;

and he hereby most graciously confirms the sentence pronounced against Lieutenants Spaen and Engelsleben, but pardons the latter on account of his long arrest. Respecting the Lieutenant Spaen, his majesty confirms likewise the sentence of the court-martial; but as to the Lieutenant Katt and his crime, and as to the sentence which has been pronounced on this point by the court-martial, his majesty (though not accustomed to aggravate the sentences of courts-martial, but rather, if possible, to mitigate them,) is obliged to remark, that this Katt is not only an officer in the army, but also in the guards. Since, therefore, the officers in the whole army must be faithful and attached to the king, this should be so much more the case with the officers of these regiments, for they are *immediately* attached to his majesty's person and his house, to prevent, by virtue of their oath, damage or injury to them. But as this Katt has been intriguing with his majesty's son, and always had underhand dealings, for his desertion, with foreign ministers and ambassadors; and as it does not belong to his situation to plot with the crown prince; but, on the contrary, he ought to have given information to his majesty and field-marshal Natzmar; his majesty does not know what futile reasons can have urged the court-martial not to condemn him to death. His majesty would thus not be able to rely upon

any officer or servant doing his duty, but all culprits would make a pretext of what had happened to Katt; and because he got through so easily and so well, they would think the same must happen to them. His majesty has also in his youth been at school, and has learned the Latin proverb, 'fiat justitia, pereat mundus:' he therefore desires, in strict justice, that Katt (though he has deserved, according to law, on account of the crime of high treason committed by him, to be torn to pieces with red hot pincers, and to be hanged,) shall only be beheaded, in consideration of his family. When the court-martial makes this sentence known to Katt, he shall be told, that his majesty is sorry for it, but that it is better he should die than that justice should quit the world." *

"Vousterhausen, 1st November 1730."

No sooner was this arbitrary and iniquitous sentence made public, than the different members of the family of this unhappy young man hastened to court, and throwing themselves at the king's feet, with tears and supplications implored his clemency.† Nor were these the only persons who interested themselves in his behalf:

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Fórster.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

the queen, the royal family, and the imperial envoy Seckendorff, all severally attempted to save him. But the ruthless Frederic William was inexorable; for he had determined in his own mind, not only that the execution of Katt should take place, but that it should be made the engine of adding tenfold to the miseries of the son he so much hated.*

The conduct of Katt from the time he first heard of the fate that awaited him, till it was put into effect, was throughout so perfect—so firm, yet resigned, that it must not be passed over in silence. It should be remembered, that Katt was only twenty-two years of age, that the sentence upon him was manifestly an unjust one, and that, according to the Princess of Bareith, his previous manner of life had not been of that kind to assist in tranquillizing him at the approach of a premature death. His father, the General Katt, had made him study with the view of bringing him up to the profession of the law, but finding no favour was to be expected under the reign of Frederic William, except for the military, he was afterwards placed in the guards. He had talent, instruction, and a knowledge of the world. The good company he always lived with had given him polished manners, which were then very rare at Berlin. His physiognomy was

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

rather disagreeable than otherwise: two black eye-brows almost covered his eyes; his look had something melancholy and ominous, which seemed to foretel his fate: a sallow skin, marked with the small-pox, added to his unsightliness. He affected irreligion, and carried profligacy to excess. Much ambition and giddiness were the companions of these vices.* Such is the character given of the young Katt by the Princess of Bareith, of which the foundation doubtless is true, though the details are likely to be rather highly coloured; as the princess appears always to have had a dislike to him, originating in a sort of jealousy of the influence he had obtained over her brother.

When his sentence was read to him, he did not change colour, nor appear in any way affected by it. "I submit myself," said he, "to the command of the king and of Providence. I shall die for a glorious cause; and I look forward to death without fear, having nothing to reproach myself with." As soon as he was alone he sent for Hartenfeld, one of the officers appointed to guard him, and who was also one of his intimate friends. He gave him a box containing the portraits of Frederic and his sister, painted by himself, and said to him, "Keep this box, and remember sometimes the unfortunate

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

Katt; but do not show it to any one, lest it might do injury after my death to the illustrious persons whose portraits are in it." To the king he wrote the following letter: —

"It is not for the purpose of justifying myself, nor to excuse my conduct up to this time, nor to prove my innocence by reasoning and argument; — no; but it is the true repentance and sorrow of having offended your majesty, which oblige me to lay at your feet, in all submission, the errors of my youth, my weakness and my imprudence. My mind which was guiltless of bad intentions, my heart which was full of tenderness and compassion, and the mere folly of my youth, are the things, my king, which most humbly plead for mercy, grace, and compassion. God, who is the King of kings, and Lord of lords, permits grace to go for right, and brings, through mercy and grace, the sinner and criminal, who walks in the path of error, again to his duty. You, therefore, my king, be pleased to afford to me the same grace, as a sinner and a criminal who has sinned towards your majesty. The hope of restoring it causes the partially-decayed tree to be spared, and preserves it from the flames. Why, then, should not the tree of my life, which already shows new shoots of loyalty and submission, find grace before your majesty? Why should it be cut down

while still in its bloom; and not show first to your majesty, and to the whole world, what true loyalty and obedience is effected by grace and mercy? I have erred, my king; I acknowledge it with a true heart: therefore, pardon it to him who honestly confesses it, and grant to me what God has not denied to the greatest sinner; for even Manasseh increased the number of his princes, however wicked he was: Saul could not so entirely fall into disobedience, and David could not so much thirst after wrong, as to prevent afterwards a sincere conversion. As many drops of blood as flow in my veins, so many shall bear witness of the new loyalty and obedience which your grace and favour will produce. God's grace and goodness allows me to hope from his mercy, and thus I do not despair. I, who implore and request, was once your disobedient vassal and subject, but now am driven by repentance and suffering back to my duty.

"KATT."*

He afterwards wrote letters to his grandfather, his father, and his brother-in-law: the one to the first has been preserved, and is really a beautiful specimen of natural and touching pathos.

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

"My most honoured grandfather,

"I cannot express to you the grief and agitation with which I write this: — I, who have ever been the principal object of your cares; — I, whom you have destined to be the support of your family; whom you have educated in all those sentiments, which could make me useful to my king and my country;—I, who have never left you without being honoured with your benefits and your counsels; — I, who ought to have become the consolation and happiness of your old age; — it is I, miserable that I am, who am now become the cause of your griefs, and the object of your despair! Instead of rejoicing you with good news, I am obliged to announce to you my condemnation to death, which has been already pronounced. Do not grieve too much over my sad fate: we must submit ourselves to the decrees of the Almighty. If he tries us with adversity, he gives us also the force to bear and the firmness to overcome it. There is nothing impossible with God: he can send help when he chooses to do so. I put all my trust in the Supreme Being, who can still turn the heart of the king to clemency, and can cause me to obtain as much favour as I now suffer of severity. If this be not the will of God, I will not the less praise and bless him; being persuaded, that whatever he orders will be for my good. Thus I submit myself with patience to

whatever your credit, and that of your friends, can obtain from his majesty. In the meanwhile, I demand forgiveness of you a thousand times over for my past faults; trusting that the good God, who pardons the greatest sinners, will have compassion upon me. I beseech you to follow his example towards me, and to believe me, &c."*

"2d November 1730."

The following verses were found written on the window of his prison, which are not recorded here for their merit, but for the purpose of showing the contented and resigned mind of the writer.

"C'est toi, fortune inconstante,
Fausse divinité;
Qui pour remplir notre attente,
Charme notre vanité.
Menteuse dans tes promesses,
Injuste dans tes revèrs,
Il n'y a jour qui ne finisse
Sans nous montrer ton caprice
Par mille tours divers.
Par le temps et la patience
On obtient une bonne conscience;
Si vous voulez sçavoir qui écrit cela,
Le nom de Katt vous apprendra,
Toujours content en éspérance."

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

Beneath these was written: —

" Whomsoever curiosity may lead to read this writing, let him learn that the writer was arrested by order of his majesty on the 16th of August of the year 1730; not without hope of recovering his liberty, though the manner in which he is confined presages something dreadful."

An ecclesiastick having come to see him, the day after his condemnation had been made known to him, with a view of preparing him for death, he said to him:—" I am a great sinner: my too great ambition has caused me to fall into many errors, of which I now repent with all my heart. I trusted too much to my good fortune: — the favour of the prince royal blinded me to such a degree, that I did not know myself. At present I discover that all is vanity; I feel a lively repentance for my sins; and I wish for death as the only path that can conduct to a solid and eternal happiness." He afterwards delivered to him a paper, containing the following sentences, charging him to convey it after his death to the hands of Frederic.

" 1st. The prince royal may, perhaps, think that I regard him as the cause of my death, and that I die in anger with him, but that is not the case. I acknowledge that Divine Providence has ordained, for good reasons, these misfortunes to fall upon me, in order to bring me to a

true repentance, and to enable me to work out my salvation.

" 2d. The causes to which I attribute this chastisement of Heaven are, first, my ambition; and secondly, my neglect of the Almighty.

" 3d. I promise the prince royal to pray for him before the throne of God.

" 4th. I beseech the prince royal to banish from his heart any anger he may feel against the king his father on account of my punishment; for he is not the cause of my death, seeing he is only in that the instrument of divine justice.

" 5th. The prince royal ought not to think that I am fallen into this calamity for want of prudence, but rather to recognize the hand of God, who confounds the wisdom of the wise.

" 6th. I entreat the prince royal to submit himself to the wishes of his majesty; first, because he is his father; and secondly, because he is his king.

" 7th. The prince royal must remember what I said to him one day at Brandenburgh, on the subject of the submission he owed to his father, citing to him the example of the history of Absalom.

" 8th. The prince royal must remember that I made him the strongest representations, first, at the camp in Saxony, where he originally had the idea of making his escape, and where I pre-

dicted to him what has now happened; and secondly, more lately one night when I paid him a visit at Potsdam.

"9th. I again implore the prince royal most solemnly, in the name of the sufferings of Jesus Christ, to submit himself to his father's will, both on account of the promises contained in the fifth commandment, and also from fear of the law of retaliation, which might some day make him feel the same griefs from his own children.

"10th. I beseech the prince royal to consider the vanity of the designs of men which are concerted without God. The prince royal would have wished to serve me, and to raise me to dignities and honours: see how these designs are frustrated! I therefore beseech the prince royal to take the law of God for the rule of all his actions, and to try them by the test of his sacred will.

"11th. The prince royal ought to be certain that he is deceived by those who flatter his passions, for they have only in view their own interests, and not his; and he ought, on the other hand, to regard as his true friends those who tell him the truth, and oppose themselves to his inclinations.

"12th. I implore the prince royal to repent, and to submit his heart to God.

"13th. Finally, I implore the prince royal

not to believe in predestination, but to acknowledge the providence and the hand of God even in the smallest occurrences of this world." *

He passed that day and the next in similar conversations and employments. On the evening of the latter the Major Schenk came to inform him that his execution was to take place at Custrin, for which fortress he was to set out immediately. At this intelligence he appeared at first surprised, but soon recovered his tranquillity, and commenced his journey with a smiling countenance. The Princess of Bareith says he was conveyed there in a carriage; but Thiebault, and the other authors who relate this affair, state that he was obliged to go the whole way on foot, habited in his prison dress, and with his hands tied behind him; and that this was specially ordered by Frederic William, in order to make every part of his punishment as degrading as possible. However this may be, for the point is not material, he was accompanied to Custrin by Schenk, who expressed to him by the way how grieved he was to be entrusted with so sad a commission; adding, "I have his majesty's orders to be present at the execution of your sentence. I twice refused this melancholy employment, but was compelled at length to obey. God knows how painful it is to my feelings. Heaven grant that the heart of the

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

king may be softened, and that I may have to announce your pardon to you."—"You are too kind to me," replied Katt; "but I am content with my fate. I die for a master I love; and I have the consolation of giving him, by my death, the strongest proof of attachment that could be required of me. I do not regret the world, for I go to enjoy endless happiness."

He arrived at Custrin on the evening of the 5th of November, and early the next morning he was led to the scaffold. On the preceding day, Frederic, having been first dressed in a coarse prison dress, similar to that which had been given to Katt, was transferred by the General Lepel, the governor of Custrin, and the president Munchow, who had the charge of him, from the apartment he had previously occupied to one on a lower floor, looking into the court of the fortress, where he found his bed prepared. At his first entrance the curtains of the windows were let down, so as to prevent his seeing into the court; but at a signal given they were drawn up, and discovered to the astonished and agitated Frederic a scaffold hung with black, and on a level with the window, which had been enlarged, and its bars removed. Upon beholding this preparation, Frederic became convinced that his own death was determined upon, and passed the night under this delusion in no very agreeable manner. Nor were his feelings much

relieved when, early in the morning, Lepel and Munchow returned to him, and undeceived him with regard to himself, but informed him that, according to the peremptory and express orders of his barbarous father, he was to witness the execution of his friend.

In the meanwhile Schenk had also informed Katt of the trial that awaited him; "Try," said he, "to preserve your firmness, my dear Katt. A dreadful trial awaits you; you are now at Custrin, and you are about to see the prince royal."—"Say rather," replied Katt, "that I am going to have the greatest consolation that could be given to me." So saying, he mounted the scaffold, while four grenadiers were employed in holding the unhappy Frederic with his face towards the window. He wished to cast himself out of it, but was kept back by those about him. "I conjure you," said he, "in God's name, to retard the execution. I will write to the king that I am ready to renounce all my rights to the crown, if he will pardon Katt." He would have said more upon this subject, but Munchow stopped his mouth with his handkerchief. When he was again permitted to speak, he cried out, "It makes me most miserable, my dear Katt, to think that I am the cause of your death. Would to God that I were in your place!"—"Ah! sir," replied Katt, "if I had a thousand lives I would wil-

lingly sacrifice them for you." The executioner now attempted to put a bandage over the eyes of Katt, which the latter resisted: then lifting up his eyes to heaven, he cried out, "My God, I render up my soul into thy hands!" At the same instant his head, which was cut off at a single blow, rolled upon the scaffold, while his arms mechanically stretched themselves towards the window where the prince royal had been stationed; but he was there no longer, having fallen in a deep swoon into the arms of his attendants. Upon recovering from this after some hours, he found himself still at the window, and in full view of the gory corpse of his friend! Such had been the express orders of a father, who was so but in name. A second swoon was the consequence of the sight.

After a time he returned to a consciousness of his misery in a high fever, during the attacks of which the emotions of his grief became so violent, that he more than once attempted to kill himself. A clergyman * attended him, who strove, by the consolations of religion, to calm his mind, but in vain: nor did he become more tranquil till exhausted nature refused to sustain any longer the enraged wanderings of delirium. Floods of tears succeeded to the first violent

* The Chaplain Müller, whose correspondence with the king respecting Frederic is given in a subsequent part of this chapter.

ebullitions of grief: he refused to eat or to take the necessary medicines; nor could his obstinacy on these points be vanquished till it was mentioned to him that his death would probably cause those of his mother and sister. For three days and three nights he continued in this state; and when his bodily health improved, a deep melancholy took possession of him, which continued to haunt him for some time longer. Till it literally fell off him in rags, he could never be prevailed upon to quit the prison dress, in which he had witnessed the death of his friend.

The body of Katt was buried in one of the bastions of the fortress: and the next day the executioner sent to Marshal Wartensleben to ask for his fee for cutting off the head of his grandson. The marshal's mingled grief and indignation at this unfeeling request nearly caused his death.*

Thus concluded the sad tragedy of the unfortunate Katt, in reading which, our detestation of the ruthless Frederic William is carried to its greatest height, while our admiration for his son is much increased. Frederic, no doubt, appears, throughout the whole of this transaction, in a more amiable light than in almost any part of his subsequent life, and shows himself the possessor of feelings deeper and more affec-

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

tionate than are usually found in the breasts of princes. There is no doubt that the horrid spectacle he had been compelled to witness had a salutary effect upon his future life; and was, at least in part, the cause of the reluctance he felt during his whole reign to the infliction of capital punishments.

The manner in which Frederic, in the Memoirs of the House of Brandenburgh, touches upon this event, and in which, as it were, he strives to rehabilitate the memory of his father, is curious: though, in fact, he fails in his attempt, for, by striving to exculpate Frederic William from all blame, he reduces his own reasoning to nothing more than a preposterous absurdity. In treating of his father's character, he says of him:— "Austere in his own morals; rigorous with regard to those of others; a severe observer of military discipline; governing his kingdom by the same laws as his army, he thought so well of humanity, that he pretended to make his subjects as stoical as he was himself. We have passed over in silence the domestic griefs of this great prince. We ought to have some indulgence for the faults of his children when reflecting on the virtues of such a father."* It is impossible not to remark, that this last sentence would contain more truth in it if trans-

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

posed; and that it would be more reasonable, "to have indulgence for the faults of such a father, in reflecting on the virtues of his children."

In 1751, Frederic had all the papers and documents relating to these trials brought to him, and having torn and destroyed many of them, doubtless with the intention of preventing posterity from knowing how atrocious and arbitrary a part Frederic William had acted in the transaction, the rest were again deposited in the archives.*

Frederic William, having failed in his attempt to take away the life of his son, seems next to have turned his thoughts towards the conversion of that son to Christianity; doubtless, a most laudable and praiseworthy endeavour, though hardly to have been expected from one, who showed so little trace of the mild and forgiving precepts of that divine religion in his own actions. To accomplish his purpose, Frederic William wrote to Müller, the chaplain of the regiment appointed to attend the execution of Katt, commanding him to see and to argue with Frederic.† This transaction, which is curious, both as connecting itself with the subsequent opinions of Frederic, and as affording a good deal of insight into the inconsistent character of his father, will be best understood by a perusal of the correspondence which took place

* Vie de Frederic II. † Ibid.

between Frederic William at Vousterhausen, and the chaplain at Custrin. The first communication of Frederic William to Müller is as follows:—

"Reverend, well-beloved, and faithful,

"I am not acquainted with you, but I have heard much good of you. I have been assured that you are a pious and honest clergyman, and a faithful minister of the word of God. Since, therefore, you are going to Custrin, on account of the execution of the Lieutenant De Katt, I command you, after the execution, to pay a visit to the prince royal; to reason with him, and to represent to him, that whoever abandons God is also abandoned by God; and that when God has abandoned a man, and has taken away his grace from him, that man is incapable of doing what is good, and can only do what is evil. You will exhort him to repent, and to ask pardon for the many sins he has committed, and into which he has seduced others; one of whom has just been punished with death. If you then find the prince contrite and humbled, you will engage him to fall on his knees with you, as well as the officers who are with him, to ask pardon of God, with tears of penitence. But you must proceed with prudence and circumspection, for the prince is cunning; and you will, therefore, take care to observe if what he does proceeds from

a sincere repentance and from a really contrite heart. You will represent to him also, in a proper manner, the error he labours under in believing that some are predestinated to one thing, and some to another; and that thus he who is predestinated to evil can do nothing but evil, and he who is predestinated to good can do nothing but good, and that consequently we can change nothing of what is to happen: a dreadful error, especially in what regards our salvation. Now, as I hope that his present situation, and the execution which has just taken place before his eyes, will touch and soften his heart, and will lead him to better sentiments, I charge you, as you value your conscience, to do all that is humanly possible to represent forcibly to the prince these things; and particularly in what relates to predestination, to convince him by means of passages from the Scriptures, which satisfactorily prove what I wish you to advance. And as he has a subtle understanding, you will take care that your answers to his objections shall be short, but at the same time solid and decisive. It will also be necessary to lead him to this discussion insensibly, and in a proper manner, as I have before said. If you find that the prince is content with your conversation, that he listens to your good instructions, and that they go to his heart, you will remain at Custrin, and you will visit the

prince royal regularly every day, to endeavour to awaken his conscience, and to operate a sincere conversion in him. But if you find, on the other hand, that it is impossible for you to gain his confidence, you will leave the place, having first written me word of it; and you may give me an account of what has happened, by word of mouth, when you are returned to Berlin. But if his heart is touched and penitent, you will also write me word of it, and you may remain with him. I am,

"Your affectionate king,

"FREDERIC WILLIAM."

"Vousterhausen, 3d November 1730."

The answers of Müller were as follows: —

"I return my most humble thanks to your majesty for the confidence you deign to place in me. I have the honour to acquaint you that the prince royal was much affected by the execution which took place yesterday; so much so, that he fainted away, and, during the rest of the day, was not able to recover from the horror and terror he felt at it. At two o'clock in the afternoon I went to him, and was obliged to remain with him till five. At seven o'clock he again sent for me. The Lieutenant De Katt, who prepared himself for death in the most exemplary manner, charged me, just before his

execution, to lay certain articles * written by him before the eyes of the prince. The prince acknowledged the truth of all that was contained in them; protesting that he had felt, ever since the commencement of this business, a sincere repentance; and adding, that he thought your majesty was not aware of this, since you had compelled him to witness this cruel execution, although he had acknowledged himself an undutiful son, and had submitted himself to the will and commands of your majesty. Under these circumstances, I shall remain here, according to the gracious intentions of your majesty; and shall wait for further orders."

"Custrin, 7th November 1730."

"By the grace of God, the designs of your majesty with regard to the prince royal have succeeded so far, that the prince at present confesses, that his offences are much more considerable than he before believed them to be, and that he humbly prays Almighty God not to enter into judgment with him. He acknowledges that his conduct was very improper at the examination he underwent before the commission appointed to that effect; and he is of opinion, that if at the beginning he had been questioned by a single person, in a milder man-

* See the paper written by Katt, pp. 119—122.

ner, and without the employment of harshness and menaces, he should not have been driven to those extremities, of which he now repents. He is also thankful to God, and to your majesty, for the salutary humiliation he has been compelled to undergo; and if his humble petitions are not sufficient, he is ready to submit himself to the paternal and royal wishes of your majesty. Now, as our Divine Saviour has said, *by thy own words thou shalt be judged,* I supplicate most humbly your majesty to open your paternal heart to kindness and mercy with regard to the prince royal, and to acquaint him of your intention as soon as possible, lest the profound melancholy in which he is at present plunged may be the cause of his death. Our conversations at present are occupied on points of religion; and since God seems to have inclined towards me the heart of the prince royal, I trust that he will listen in all things to my instructions. In the hope that your majesty will deign to grant my prayer, I am, &c."

"8th November, in the morning."

"Since the report that I had the honour of sending yesterday to your majesty, the following conversations have taken place. Yesterday morning the prince royal began, of his own accord, to turn the conversation to predestination and absolute fatalism; and after dinner he de-

tailed his opinions to me, in order that I might answer them. I tried to refute them entirely, and to give him from the Holy Scriptures clear proofs of the order and conditions of predestination, as well as of general grace. He was singularly struck, among other passages, with the 7th verse of the 2d chapter of the 2d Epistle of Saint Peter, where it is said, *that God has also redeemed those who are condemned.* He had never read this passage. It proves clearly that the intention of God is, that even the most wicked among men should be saved, and that if they are lost, they alone are the cause of their damnation, and not God. After that, I quoted to him the passage of the Epistle of Saint Paul to Timothy, chapter the eleventh, verse 1st to 6th; and I developed all the force of the argument contained in it, to which he only made answer by means of comparisons. For example, he observed to me, that when the wheels of a watch were arranged, they could not go except as that arrangement permitted. To which I answered him in few words, that that comparison proved nothing, because the wheels of a watch, having neither intelligence nor free will, cannot, in consequence, offer opposition in any way. He made afterwards another comparison with regard to fire, which has necessarily the same effect upon all wood of the same kind. I answered him, that if beforehand a

piece of this wood was dipped in water, the force of the fire would no longer have the same effect upon it. I opposed to these a comparison of the same kind, to show him clearly how a man makes his own salvation. 'Suppose,' said I, 'two men had fallen into the castle ditch, and that a cord was thrown to each of them, which they were respectively desired to take hold of, and were assured by this means they would be saved. If one took hold of the cord, and the other refused to do so, is it not clear, that the latter would be the cause of his own destruction?' The prince replied: 'Luther himself believed in absolute decrees; why do you abandon the doctrine of Luther?' I answered, that in the first place, Luther is not the rule of our faith, but the word of God. Secondly, that this theologian, in the end, acknowledged the tenets of the doctrine which we preach. And thirdly, that there are also in the reformed church many theologians who reject the doctrine of absolute decrees as an evident and dangerous error, and who admit that of general grace. Why will your royal highness not follow these wise theologians? 'That is true,' answered he, 'and it merits reflection; I know among others that Noltenius admits the doctrine of general grace.'

"After this he told me that he was too weak to continue talking, as he still felt the effects of the violent agitation he had un-

dergone. When he was a little restored, he said to me: 'I should never have thought that the Lutherans taught such a doctrine. This makes me see that it is not fatality, but I alone who am the cause of the death of Katt, and of my own misfortunes.' I answered him, that he was now in the right path, since he acknowledged his fault, and was aware of the greatness of it; but that it was necessary for him to be in a right disposition, in order that God might conduct him to a true repentance, and an entire change of his heart and actions; that for this purpose he ought to implore the goodness of God by fervent prayer, demanding pardon of him for his many sins, and invoke ardently the Holy Spirit to deign to change his heart; that thus the designs of God and his majesty with respect to him might be accomplished. He answered, 'I consent to that with all my heart, provided I can still hope to obtain mercy, and that God will still in this life enter into an account with me.' I answered, that God made him feel his wrath in order to lead him to implore his grace. He replied, 'I believe it also; but I fear I shall never be able again to regain the king's favour; he will certainly never pardon me my faults, or at least never entirely; but will always preserve the recollection of them, because I have irritated him so much.' 'Do not think that,' replied I to him, 'for God has led the heart of the king to

perform this act of justice, in order to lead you to just sentiments, and a constant and sincere change of life. It does not argue a design of destroying a tree, of which there is great hope, to cut off one of its branches, or to remove from it whatever might prevent its growth and its bearing fruit; in the same manner it is not the king's intention to destroy you.' 'That I can hardly believe,' replied the prince, 'for he gives me no mark at all of his kindness, though I have been a long time imploring and waiting for it.' I tried to tranquillize him, by saying to him, 'A proof that the king does not wish for your destruction, but only for your conversion and amendment, is, first, that he has had Katt executed before your eyes, in order to lead you to serious reflection; and secondly, that he has removed you from the secular tribunal, and that he has permitted me, who am a minister of the word of God, to converse with you respecting that word, and to lead you again into the right path; which is a certain proof of the affection the king has for you, and of the interest that he takes in the salvation of your soul.' After a moment of silence the prince replied, '*Provided the end of your visits is not to prepare me also for death.*' I had much difficulty to tranquillize him on this head. I assured him that when the king should once be sure of his change, he would see that he was a merciful father, and

a king full of clemency and goodness for him, and that therefore he ought to take courage, and abandon all these melancholy ideas; and I added, that the time of my remaining about his person depended on himself. Then I prayed with him; and after this act of piety he seemed a little more tranquil, and bade me to remain still with him if I could, and if possible to sleep in the castle, in order that I might be nearer to him, and that he might have more frequent conversations with me for his edification. This I have done.

As I can assure your majesty before God, that in the various marks of repentance and compunction manifested by the prince royal, there is not the slightest trace of dissimulation, I supplicate you most humbly to have recourse to mercy, in imitation of Almighty God, and to cause to shine upon the prince a ray of your royal clemency; for I am always in fear lest the terror and the idea of the misfortunes which may still happen to him, as well as his melancholy, which augments daily, may produce some dreadful mental malady, of which it may be impossible to cure him. May God, the father of mercies, open the paternal and royal heart of your majesty to the granting of my most humble prayer! Amen."

"Custrin, 9th of November, in the morning."

This report from the chaplain produced a second letter from the king :—

" Reverend, well-beloved, and faithful,

" I have received your two reports, and I order you, in answer, to remain still at Custrin till further orders, and to go regularly to the prince royal, and continue to convince and to exhort him, by the word of God, to turn his thoughts inwards ; to confess, from the bottom of his heart, all the sins he has committed, whether against God, or against me, who am his father and his king, or against himself, and against his own honour ; and to be repentant for them. For to borrow money without being able to repay it, and to try to desert, are not the actions of an honest man : such actions can only come from hell and the children of the devil, and never from the children of God. You send me word, that you believe, on your conscience and before Heaven, that the prince is converted to God ; that he demands pardon a thousand times of his king, his lord, and his father, for all his crimes ; and that he repents, with all his heart, the not having been always submissive to the will of his father. If you still find the prince royal in these dispositions, if he promises all these things before God, if he repents, with all his heart, of the faults he has committed, and is in the firm resolution of correcting him-

self as he promises, and in the manner which you have stated to me, you will declare to him in my name, that though I cannot in truth pardon him entirely, yet, that having more affection for him than he merits, I will diminish the harshness of his prison, and will put about him persons to watch his conduct. He shall have the whole town for his prison, but he must not be permitted to go beyond it. I shall give him occupations, for the whole day, at the chambers of war, of domains, and of the regency. He will occupy himself in affairs of finance; will read the acts, and will make extracts from them. But before I accord to him this grace, I shall exact from him a solemn oath to conform himself exactly, and with submission, to all my orders and to all my wishes; and to do, without exception, all that is the duty of a faithful servant, and a submissive and obedient son. But if he falls again into his faults, and recommences his old courses, he shall be deprived of his succession to the throne and to the electoral dignity, and even, if the nature of his crimes require it, be condemned to death.

"You will tell him to be patient till all is ready for this new arrangement; when I shall send the Lieutenant-Generals Grumkow, Borck, and Roeder, Major-General Buddenbrock, the Colonels Woldow and Derschau, and the Privy Counsellor Tulmeier, to him, to receive his oath.

"I recommend to you, upon the present occasion, to assure the prince that I know him well; and that if he has ever thought I did not know him, he shall at least now be himself convinced that I know the evil of his heart. Thus, if he is not really submissive and changed, but still in the same dispositions as ever, he will, perhaps, try to repeat the aforesaid oath with a low voice and in an indistinct manner. On this subject you will tell him from me, that, as a friend, I advise him to pronounce this oath aloud and distinctly, and to believe that he will be held before God to observe it to the letter. Impress it upon him, that no mental reservation can be allowed, but that he will be held exactly to what is written; that, therefore, if he breaks this oath, or departs from it in the smallest point, he will not be excused for it. He should bear this always in mind, and strive earnestly to vanquish and overcome, with the assistance of God, the perverse inclinations of his heart, since it is a question here of points of the greatest importance. May the Almighty Lord give us his holy blessing! And, as he often makes use of extraordinary means and trials of misfortunes to bring back men to the kingdom of Jesus Christ, may this Divine Saviour assist us to recal my wandering son to the number of his servants! May he melt and soften this hardened heart, and snatch it from the fangs

of Satan! May God, the Father Almighty, grant us this grace, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, through his passion and his death! Amen.

"I remain your affectionate king,

"FREDERIC WILLIAM."

"Vousterhausen, 9th Nov. 1730."

To this letter of the king Müller returned the following answer:—

"I have received from the governor of this town the gracious order of your majesty, of the 9th of this month. Immediately upon receiving it, I went to the prince royal, and on entering his room I found him reading the Bible, and meditating on the 14th and 15th verses of the 2d chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. I begged him to communicate to me his reflections: he did so, and spoke in the most edifying manner of the merits procured to us by the death of our Saviour, and of our duties on this point. I seized this occasion to turn the conversation to that true conversion and that sincere change of the heart, which, as I represented to him, are the necessary means to enable us to participate in the merits of Jesus Christ. Having asked him again, whether he persisted in his repentance, in the firm determination to change his conduct, and to give proofs of his conver-

sion in a profound submission and obedience to the orders of the king his father; he answered, 'With all my heart, provided the king believes me, and trusts in my promises; but I fear he will never be kind to me again.' Thereupon, I assured him that your majesty would believe his word; adding, that he also should consider whether he was willing to confirm with an oath his promise to change his conduct; and that, in that case, he might be certain that your majesty would have no more suspicion of him. The prince answered me: 'Are you then sure that the king will restore his kindness to me again?' 'He will not restore it to you at once,' replied I, 'but I am certain he will restore it to you by degrees, and in proportion as he shall see the effect of your promises.'

"Afterwards I acquainted him with what your majesty had ordered me to tell him from you. As soon as he learned your intentions, he was so touched with this mark of your paternal and royal goodness, that the tears came into his eyes, and he said to me, 'Is this possible? Is it not only that you have been desired *to say* this to me?' At these words, I took from my pocket your majesty's order, and put it into his hands to read. After having read it, he told me that he was touched in all humility with the goodness of your majesty, and that he would conform himself entirely to your orders. He added, that, with

regard to the oath, he was aware of all the importance attached to taking it; that he knew he could make no mental reservation; that he must swear and promise according to the sense and intention of those who prescribed the oath; and understand it in the manner, in which they wished it to be understood. 'I am resolved,' said he, 'never to break it, and to pronounce it distinctly and with a loud voice. But, on the other hand, I have a firm conviction that, in the formula which his majesty will prescribe to me, there will be nothing but what is paternal, and what is possible for me to execute. And as, in an affair of this importance, I should wish not to act without serious reflection, I will ask of his majesty, before he sends the commissioners to me, to deign to show me the formula and the articles it contains; in order that I may do nothing with precipitation, or without much consideration, and that I may be able to prepare myself, with as real sincerity as possible, to promise and fulfil all the articles.' In order that I may also, upon this point, fulfil my functions towards the prince royal, and strengthen him more and more in his good designs, I humbly pray your majesty to send him beforehand this formula and these articles.

"I am, &c." *

"Custrin, the 11th November."

* Vie de Frederic II.

More letters passed between the king and the chaplain, but as their contents are unimportant they are omitted. After a short further stay at Custrin, Müller was permitted to leave that fortress, and return to Berlin; without having, as it would appear, achieved the conversion of Frederic.

From the foregoing letters it is melancholy to observe, that, even thus early, Frederic had manifested that disposition to infidelity, which subsequently in an aggravated degree accompanied him through his long career, tarnished the brightness of his glories, shed a hopeless gloom over his old age, and extended its baleful influence even to his tomb. It would seem, indeed, that the harsh and forbidding manner in which Frederic William strove to inculcate his lessons of divinity had an effect directly the reverse from what he intended: nor is it difficult to conceive that, to a mind naturally disposed to scepticism, the sacred precepts of the Gospel, enforced only by cruel treatment and close confinement, would carry but little conviction; especially when we consider that Frederic beheld in christianity the religion of that father, who had just dyed his hands in the innocent blood of his intimate friend. From this time the infidelity of Frederic became more decided, and his estrangement from religion more open: so

that it would appear, that the apparent concessions made by him to the chaplain upon doctrinal points, were yielded rather from a view of obtaining a release from confinement, than from any conviction of their truth.

CHAPTER VI.

FREDERIC STILL IN CONFINEMENT: — HE WRITES TO HIS FATHER: — IS ALLOWED GREATER LIBERTY: — HIS AMUSEMENTS AND OCCUPATIONS AT CUSTRIN. — FREDERIC WILLIAM VISITS HIS SON. — RECONCILIATION OF THE KING AND QUEEN, BUT THE PRINCESS WILHELMINA CONTINUES IN DISGRACE: — PROJECTS OF THE KING FOR HER MARRIAGE WITH THE PRINCE OF BAREITH. — CONDUCT OF HER FATHER AND MOTHER TO THE PRINCESS. — CHARACTER AND APPEARANCE OF THE PRINCE OF BAREITH. — SINGULAR CONDUCT OF THE QUEEN. — MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCESS. — FREDERIC RECALLED TO COURT: — HIS MARRIAGE WITH THE PRINCESS OF BEVERN, AND SUBSEQUENT NEGLECT OF HER.

It does not appear, in spite of the submissions of Frederic, that a relaxation of his confinement immediately followed his conversations with Müller; but shortly after this he received a visit from Grumkow, who finding him in a miserably low state of spirits, which he attributed in part to the rigorous nature of his confinement, persuaded him with some difficulty to write a submissive letter to the king; which Grumkow promised to present to him, and to support by all the influence he was master of. The following is the letter of Frederic to his father: —

" Custrin, 15th November 1730.

" I acknowledge that I have given your majesty, my most gracious father, cause for just anger and indignation, through my disobedience as your subject and soldier, as well as through my want of duty as your son. With the most submissive respect I throw myself entirely upon your mercy, my gracious father, and implore that you will most graciously pardon me; since it is not the privation of my liberty in my unfortunate arrest that has so much brought me to reason, as my own regret for the error I have committed. I remain with the most humble respect and submission to the end of my life,"* &c.

The consequence of this letter, and of the representations of Grumkow, was the release of Frederic from the fortress; instead of which the town of Custrin was given him for his prison, as had been before promised by the king's letter to Müller. Still his condition, though improved, was very deplorable: all amusement was denied to him, and, above all, the reading, writing, and speaking French were forbidden. To employ him, the king made him a counsellor of war, with the injunction that he was to assist regularly at all the meetings of the chamber of counsellors of that district, at which he was ordered to take

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

his place below the junior counsellor. Nor was his presence at these meetings all that was necessary; the king insisted also upon his acting the part of a diligent scribe, as we learn by the following anecdote. Upon a certain occasion, the president of the chamber reported thus to the king: — "I have the honour to send your majesty three reports of the chamber of war and royal domains of the New March.* Two have been copied by the prince royal with his own hand; the third he has only signed." On the margin of this Frederic William wrote, "It is not enough for Fritz to sign; he must work himself." †

Three persons were appointed to watch over Frederic, and to keep him strictly to the letter of the king's commands. Their names were Vollen, Rovedel, and Natzmar; the latter was the son of the marshal of that name. His diet was regulated at a sum, which made it barely sufficient to prevent actual starvation: his apartment was most miserable, and almost entirely devoid of furniture: he was in great want of linen, and of others of the first necessaries of life: at nine o'clock at night his candle was taken from him; while pen ink and paper, and books, were alike denied to him. These numerous petty vexations composed a whole of so much wretchedness, that his firmness, gave way

* Of Brandenburgh. † Vie de Frederic II.

under it; and he at length confided to the president Munchow, who had always acted with kindness towards him, his determination of writing to the king, and offering to give up his rights to the throne to his next brother, for a pension, and permission to live out of the Prussian states. Munchow, like a true friend, dissuaded him from becoming a second Esau, and subsequently found means privately to ameliorate his condition.

By degrees, as will always happen by time, and more particularly where the wishes of all concerned are on the side of the prisoner, Frederic began to be less strictly guarded; and the president took advantage of this to assist him with many little comforts — such as linen, plate, furniture, books, writing materials, &c. The inhabitants of Custrin and the neighbourhood, as well as the colony of French refugees settled at Berlin, also subscribed to improve his food.* The person who took away his candle at nine o'clock, continued to do so, but returned immediately afterwards with two.† His attendance at the meetings of the counsellors of war was frequently dispensed with; and when he did attend, instead of copying reports, he was allowed to amuse himself as he pleased; and accordingly he passed his time at these sit-

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

tings either in reading French pamphlets, or in drawing caricatures of the president and his brother counsellors, and representing them with satirical appendages, such as horns; or with bottles, cards, pipes, &c. in their hands.*

But the greatest amelioration of his condition, which Frederic obtained during the year of his detention at Custrin, was the being suffered to visit in disguise the castle of Tamsel, situated within a mile of Custrin, and the habitation of the Barons Wrech, one of the most ancient families of the province.† There lived the father and mother, three sons and four daughters, who all became the constant companions of Frederic. Every afternoon, as the day closed, Frederic paid a visit to Tamsel, and passed the evening there, either in conversation or in concerts, in which he himself bore a part together with the younger members of the family. He also received from this house presents of books, candles, comestibles, &c.; and loans of money at different times, of which the sum total, when he left Custrin, amounted to 6000 rix-dollars. It has been said, but whether truly or not it is difficult to decide, that this debt was never acquitted by Frederic. What encourages the supposition is, the circumstance of his evident ingratitude to the Wrechs after his accession to the

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

throne. Their family was always known as in the number of those, which, during his whole reign, appeared to be in a sort of disgrace. He never received them kindly, and never granted them any favour. The court of Prince Henry was the only one in which they were ever employed: all they could obtain from the king was to escape being persecuted. This was also the case with regard to the relations of the amiable and unfortunate De Katt.

"Feeling minds," continues Thiebault, "are naturally and properly shocked, at traits like these, which appear to proceed from such thorough ingratitude; but they forget, that Frederic, become king, wished in every thing to calculate and act as king. He laid it down as a principle, that he ought to sacrifice every thing to social order; that every thing which was contrary to these interests ought to be proscribed and put down by sovereign authority. Those, therefore, who had served the prince royal could not but be suspected in his eyes: and in support of the same system, it has always been observed, that he repulsed from him those who showed a very marked attachment to his brothers, or others of his family, though in other respects he was so attentive to perform all the duties of an affectionate relation." * That this may have been

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

the reason for the subsequent conduct of Frederic to the families of Wrech and Katt is very probable; but while we acknowledge it as the cause, we can never consider it as a sufficient excuse for ingratitude such as is here described. Whatever may have been the duties of Frederic as king, they ought not to have superseded the prior duties he owed to feeling, principle, and justice.

Some months after the apprehension of Frederic, the king came to Custrin, and upon his arrival there sent for him. He embraced him, and conversed with him kindly for a quarter of an hour, without alluding to his detention, or to the cause of it. This step was not, however, followed by any acts of grace towards Frederic, whose condition remained the same till his final release. *

The year 1731 commenced with the reconciliation of the king and queen, who had been on the worst terms ever since the time of the arrest of Frederic. The Princess Wilhelmina, however, still continued in disgrace and in confinement; and she describes her situation, both physical and moral, as most miserable. "I was shut up," says she, "in my bed-chamber, where I saw nobody, and continued always to fast. I was really dying of hunger. I read as long as there was daylight,

* Friedrichs des Grossen Jugendjahre, von Fr. Förster.

and made remarks upon what I read. My health began to give way. I became as thin as a skeleton from want of food and exercise. One day as Madame de Sonsfeld and myself were at table, looking sadly at one another, having nothing to eat but a soup made with salt and water, and a ragout of old bones, full of hairs and other dirt, we heard a knock at the window. Surprised, we rose hastily to see what it was. We found a raven, with a morsel of bread in its beak, which it laid down on the sill of the window as soon as it saw us, and flew away. Tears came into our eyes at this adventure. 'Our lot is very deplorable,' said I to my governess, 'since it even touches the creatures devoid of reason: they have more compassion for us than men, who treat us with so much cruelty. Let us receive the omen of this bird. Our situation is about to change. I am now reading the Roman history, and I have found there,' continued I, joking, 'that their approach is considered fortunate.' In fact, nothing could be more natural or less extraordinary than the circumstance I have related. The raven was tame, and belonged to the Margrave Albert: it had probably lost itself, and was seeking for its home. However, my servants thought the event so wonderful, that it was soon divulged to all the town; which inspired so much pity for my misfortunes to the colony of French refugees, that,

at the risk of incurring the displeasure of the king, they sent me food every day in baskets, which they placed before my dressing-room, and which the Mermann * took care to empty." †

After a certain time the princess was allowed to see her sisters and the ladies of the court; and upon her writing a letter to her father, to request permission to receive the sacrament, which she had not done for nine months, he consented, replying, "My blackguard daughter may receive the Sacrament!" ‡ After this, her situation became for a short time more tranquil and comfortable than it had hitherto been, the king and queen being absent at Potsdam; in consequence of which, she adds, "I heard nothing more of my odious marriages. My little society was amiable and accommodating. I accustomed myself by degrees to living in retirement, and became really a philosopher."

This, however, did not last long; for in the month of March, she tells us, the king again began to worry the queen about her marriage. He now wanted her to marry the Duke of Weissenfeld, a younger branch of the electoral house of Saxony; while the queen had recommenced her intrigues with the court of England. At length she persuaded the king to give orders

* One of the Princess's attendants.

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

‡ "Ma canaille de fille peut communier."

to his ministers to make a formal proposition for the alliance of the Princess Wilhelmina with the Prince of Wales; and she now entertained, in consequence, every hope of the success of her long-cherished scheme.

Before, however, any answer could arrive from England, the king had again changed his mind, and expressed his intention of marrying his daughter to the hereditary Prince of Bareith, whose family was a younger branch of that of Brandenburgh. No sooner had he come to this determination, than he ordered a deputation of his ministers, headed by Grumkow, to go to the princess, to inform her of his wishes; and to threaten her, if she did not consent to them, with the most rigorous treatment, both for herself and her attendants. Madame de Sonsfeld her governess was more particularly designated as the object of the king's vengeance in case of the refusal of the princess. At the same time with this disastrous intelligence arrived the following letter from the queen, which only added to the perplexities of her unhappy daughter:—"All is lost, my dear daughter; the king is determined at all hazards on your marriage. I have sustained several dreadful contests on this subject, but neither my prayers nor my tears have had any effect. Eversmann has orders to make the purchases necessary for your marriage. You must prepare yourself to

lose the Sonsfeld. He is determined to have her degraded with infamy if you do not obey him. Some one will be sent to persuade you. In God's name consent to nothing, and I will support you in it. A prison is better than a bad marriage. Adieu, my dear daughter. I expect every thing from your firmness."

The arrival of this letter to the hands of the princess was shortly afterwards followed by that of the deputation of ministers, consisting of Messrs. Grumkow, Podevils, Borck, and Tulmeier; who, in a long conference they had with her, employed alternately entreaties, arguments, prayers, and threats, to induce her to submit to the king's wishes. The argument which seemed to have the most weight with her was, the probability of her compliance causing an amelioration in the condition of the prince royal, which was dexterously held out to her by Grumkow. Still her mind remained in a dreadful state of indecision, from the fear of bringing upon herself the displeasure of either the king or the queen; a calamity she was sure to incur whichever part she took. She describes herself as in a terrible agitation; running about the room, searching in her own mind for an expedient to satisfy the king, without incensing the queen. *

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

Grumkow, Borck, and Podevils, willing to allow her time for reflection, retired into the recess of a window, and conversed together. Tulmeier took this opportunity of approaching her, and told her his name. He then added, in a low tone, that she had better not resist any longer, but submit to whatever was required of her; and that he would answer to her with his life that the marriage never would really take place. He said it was necessary, whatever it might cost, to appease the king for the present; and that he would engage to make the queen understand, that this was the only means of obtaining a favourable declaration from the King of England. This communication determined the line, which the princess resolved upon taking. She immediately yielded, and told the ministers that she was willing to sacrifice herself for the peace of her family; at the same time entreating them with many tears, to fulfil the promises they had made her in the king's name in favour of the prince royal. They confirmed what they had before said with the most solemn oaths; and then persuaded her to write a letter of submission to the king, the terms of which were dictated to her by Grumkow. This being done, they went away, leaving her in a state of the deepest despair. The following is the letter which the princess wrote to her mother upon this occasion: —

"Madam,

"Your majesty will have been already informed of my misfortune by the letter, which I did myself the honour to write to you yesterday, under cover to the king. I have hardly strength enough to trace these lines, and my state altogether is worthy of pity. It is not any menaces, however violent they may have been, which have compelled my consent to the king's wishes: an interest that is still more dear to me has determined me to this sacrifice. I have been till now the innocent cause of all the unhappinesses your majesty has endured. My too sensible heart has been penetrated by the touching details you have latterly made me of them. You have been willing to suffer for me: is it not much more natural that I should sacrifice myself for you, and that I should finish once for all this fatal division in the family? Could I balance a moment between the choice of unhappiness for myself and the pardon of my brother? What dreadful discourses have there not been held to me on his subject: I tremble when I think of them. All the objections that I could allege against the king's proposal were refuted to me beforehand. Your majesty yourself had proposed to him the Prince of Bareith as a fit alliance for me: I cannot therefore imagine that you will disapprove of my resolution: besides, necessity is not to be resisted. Though I was

most pressing to that effect, I could not obtain permission to ask your majesty's consent. I was obliged to decide at once either to obey with a good grace, and thus to obtain real advantages for my brother; or to expose myself by a refusal to the last degree of severity, which would finally have reduced me to the same step I have just taken. I shall have the honour to offer a more circumstantial detail of the whole transaction to your majesty, when I shall be permitted to throw myself at your feet. I can understand easily what must be your grief on the occasion, and it is this which touches me the most. I implore you most humbly to tranquillize yourself with regard to my lot, and to trust the whole to Providence, who does every thing for our good; and the more so, because I find myself really happy, in becoming the instrument of the happiness of my dear mother, and of my brother. What would I not do to testify to them my affection! I repeat to you my supplications with regard to your own health, which I conjure you to take care of, and not to injure by yielding too much to your grief. The pleasure of so soon seeing my brother again ought to render this reverse the more supportable to you. I hope that you will grant me a generous pardon for the fault that I have committed, in entering into engagements without your knowledge, in favour of the sentiments of affection

and of respect with which I shall be all my life, &c."*

The same evening the princess received the following answer to the letter she had sent to her father by Grumkow: — "I am delighted, my dear Wilhelmina, that you are so submissive to the wishes of your father. The good God will bless you for it, and I will never abandon you. I will take care of you all my life, and will endeavour to prove to you on every occasion that I am your very affectionate father."

Very different was the letter which the following morning brought her from the queen: — "You have cut me to the heart, and have inflicted upon me the greatest misery I ever endured. I had placed all my hope in you, in consequence of my ignorance of your character. You have had the address to disguise to me the bad propensities of your heart, and the baseness of your disposition. I repent a thousand times the kindness I have shown you, the care I have taken of your education, and all that I have suffered on your account. I no longer acknowledge you as my daughter, and shall in future never regard you but as my most cruel enemy, since it is you who have sacrificed me to my persecutors, who now triumph over me.

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

Never count upon me again, as I vow eternal hatred to you, and will never forgive you." *

A few days after the receipt of this maternal epistle, the princess was informed of the arrival of the king at Berlin, and was immediately summoned to attend him. The king received her graciously, and with abundance of promises of his intended liberalities towards her. Not so the queen, who, upon first seeing her, repeated all the harsh things she had before written in her letter, and treated her with so much severity that the princess fainted.

It appears that, subsequently to this scene, Tulmeier performed the promise he had made to the princess of appeasing the queen; and that, in consequence of his endeavours, and the hopes he still held out to her respecting the English marriage, her demeanour towards her daughter, though still cold, became much improved. But that her real feelings remained unchanged is evident, from the following description of the effect, which the sudden arrival at court of the Hereditary Prince of Bareith had upon his future mother-in-law.

" The king begged the queen to be present at the review on Sunday, and to go there in a phaeton, with my sister, the Duchess of Bevern, and myself. As he was to get up very early,

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

he went to bed at seven, and enjoined the queen to amuse the princes during the evening, and to sup with them. We played at faro till supper was ready. In passing through one of the rooms, in order to go to supper, we saw a chaise with post-horses arrive, which stopped at the foot of the great staircase, after having passed through the court of the palace. The queen appeared surprised at this, as it is only princes who have this privilege. She asked immediately who it was, and learnt that it was the Hereditary Prince of Bareith. The head of Medusa never produced such horror, as did this piece of news to the queen. For some time she could not utter, and changed colour so often, that we thought she would faint. Her state went to my heart. I remained as immovable as her; and every one present appeared full of consternation." *

The character and appearance of the prince, whose arrival so much disturbed the harmony of the royal supper party in the palace of Berlin, are thus sketched by his wife:—"The prince is tall, well made, and has a noble air. His features are neither handsome nor regular; but his countenance, which is open, engaging, and very agreeable, stands him in the place of beauty. He is of a hasty temper, and replies with

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

quickness and without embarrassment. Though his nature is inclined to anger, he knows so well how to overcome it, that it is never perceived, and no one has ever suffered by it. He is very gay: his conversation is agreeable, though he has some difficulty in making himself intelligible, from lisping so much. His conception is quick, and his intellect penetrating. The goodness of his heart gains him the attachment of all who know him. He is generous, charitable, compassionate, polite, engaging, and enjoys very equal spirits:—in short, he possesses all the virtues, without any mixture of the vices. The only fault I know in him is rather too much levity, which I must mention here, as otherwise I should be accused of partiality: he has, however, much corrected himself of it." *

In spite of the queen's intrigues, and of her ill-treatment of her daughter and her future son-in-law, the necessary preparations for the marriage went on. The preliminary ceremony of betrothing, which in Prussia is marked by the interchange of what is called the ring of promise, was celebrated in June; and the very evening of the day on which it had taken place, a courier arrived from England, bringing intelligence, that the English court had yielded to all the stipulations demanded by the King of

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

Prussia, in the case of his daughter's marriage with the Prince of Wales. Frederic William had gone too far in his engagements with the Prince of Bareith to retract; but the annoyance which this caused him, irritated his temper so much against his innocent daughter, that he again recommenced his severities towards her; while the queen, whose disappointment was still greater, inasmuch as both her hopes and wishes had been more ardent, actually fell ill from chagrin and anger. The interval between the betrothing of the Princess Royal and her marriage was filled up with a continuance of the same scenes, which have been before described, with the addition of some quarrels between her and the Princess Charlotte, afterwards Duchess of Brunswick, who wished to take the Prince of Bareith from her sister; and the constant complaints of the poor prince himself, to whom his future wife behaved with the most chilling coldness, in consequence of the peremptory orders of the queen her mother to that effect.

To go into farther details upon these disagreeable subjects would be tedious; and they have only been thus much dwelt upon, as showing, in some degree, the manners of the court of Berlin at this period, and the characters of the royal family who composed it. The description, however, given by the Princess of Bareith of the

palace of Vousterhausen, to which she made a journey at this time with the king and queen, as well as the way of life there, are much too remarkable to be omitted. The king had raised at this place, by dint of manual labour, a hill of barren sand, over which passed the road which led to the palace. The palace itself was a small building, attached to an old tower, in which was a spiral wooden staircase. The house was surrounded with a terrace, beyond which was a moat filled with black stagnant water. Three bridges, which were placed on each side of the house, formed a communication with the court, the garden, and a mill that was opposite. The court was flanked on each side by wings, where the king's suite were lodged. It was also bounded by a pallisade, at the entrance of which were placed two white eagles, two black eagles, and two bears, by way of sentinels, which, being very vicious animals, attacked every body who passed. In the middle of this court there was a well, from which with great difficulty the water was raised for the use of the kitchen. This was surrounded with steps and iron rails, and was the spot selected by the king for his smoking in the evening. While at this delectable residence, the royal family were made to dine, whatever might be the weather, under a large lime tree; and when it rained hard, they sat in water above their ancles, that part of the ground being lower

than the rest. Twenty-four persons always sat down to table, of whom three-fourths fasted, as the dinner only consisted of six very economical dishes. During the morning the princesses remained shut up with the queen, who played at cards unceasingly, and never permitted them to go out. The king left the dinner table at one o'clock in the afternoon: he then stretched himself in an arm-chair, which was placed for him on the terrace, and slept for a considerable time, exposed to the greatest heat of the sun; which his family also were compelled to endure, and, having no seats provided for them, their only resource was lying down on the ground at his feet. *

While at this place, the princess received a letter from her brother, expressing his approbation of the resolution she had taken, to put an end to the domestic dissensions of her family by marrying; and showing at the same time a kind anxiety respecting her future happiness. For himself, he said he was satisfied with his own way of life, which he found very amusing.

The marriage of the princess royal took place on the 20th of November. On the day before it was to happen, the queen, who lived always in expectation of the arrival of news from England, which would break it off, and

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

who, it seems, was by no means scrupulous of the means to be employed to attain that much-desired object, took her daughter aside, and entreated her, since the marriage ceremony must take place, as a last resource, not to allow it to be consummated; in which case, as she imagined, a divorce from the Prince of Bareith would be easy to be obtained. To this proposition it does not appear that the Princess made any answer.*

On the morning of the day on which the marriage was to take place, the princess went betimes to the queen's apartment, and from thence to the king's, where she made a formal renunciation of her rights to the personal property belonging to her family. She then dined with her family and her intended husband; after which she retired with the queen, for the purpose of being dressed for the ceremony. The queen, whose object was to gain time, in hopes of fresh news from England, as fast as one side of the princess's hair was dressed, undid it again; so that at last the hair would no longer curl, which, as the princess herself observes, made her look like a mad woman. She adds:— "A royal crown was placed upon my head, together with twenty-four curls of false hair, each as big as my arm. I could not hold up my head, as it was too weak for so great a

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

weight. My gown was a very rich silver brocade, trimmed with gold lace, and my train was twelve yards long. I thought I should have died under this dress."

The marriage took place in the great apartment of the palace at Berlin, of which the furniture and ornaments were entirely of silver. The moment of the benediction being given was marked by a triple discharge of cannon; after which the princess, seated under a canopy, received the congratulations of all the court. This was followed by a ball, and then a supper, at which the king amused himself by making his new son-in-law drunk. After the supper, the dance of torches, an old German custom, took place. It consisted of the whole court walking gravely through the different rooms, to the sound of music, each holding a torch. During its performance the new-married couple walked with all the princes and princesses in turn. The princess was then undressed by her sisters, and the day concluded.

The third day after the marriage the king fulfilled his promise to his daughter, of recalling her brother Frederic, and restoring him to his favour. His first appearance at court is thus described by the princess:— "The 23d of November there was a ball in the great apartment of the palace, of which I profited as much as I was able, being fond of dancing. Grumkow

came and interrupted me in the middle of a minuet. 'Really, madam,' said he, 'it seems as if you had been bitten by a tarantula; do you not see the strangers who are just arrived?' I stopped immediately, and looking round me, saw a young man in a grey coat, who was unknown to me. 'Go,' said he, 'and embrace the prince royal, for you see him before you.' My whole frame was agitated with joy. 'Oh, Heavens! my brother!' cried I; 'but I do not see him; where is he? For God's sake, show him to me!' Grumkow conducted me to him. As I came nearer I recognized him, but with difficulty. He was grown prodigiously fatter, and his neck much shorter; his face also was much changed, and was no longer as handsome as it had been. I fell upon his neck. I was so overcome that I could only speak in an unconnected manner: I wept and laughed like a person out of her senses. After these first emotions were subsided, I went and threw myself at the feet of the king, who said to me aloud, in the presence of my brother, 'Are you content with me? You see that I have kept my word with you.' I took my brother by the hand, and implored the king to restore his affection to him. This scene was so touching that it drew tears from all present." *

Previously to the release of Frederic, an oath

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

had been administered to him at Custrin, by which he bound himself to pay to his father the obedience he owed him; not to make any attempt at escaping, nor to take any journey without his permission; to live in the fear of God, and fulfil the duties of religion; and, finally, to marry any princess, who should be destined to him by his father. When Frederic's uniform was restored to him, he was offered a sword with it, but refused to put it on, saying, "It is he who took my sword away from me, who ought to restore it to me," nor would he wear one till it was given him by the king.*

The fêtes for the marriage of his sister being concluded, Frederic went to his regiment, which was in garrison in the provinces; and the princess royal and her husband departed to Bareith, where shortly afterwards she received letters from her brother, complaining of the intention the king had, of marrying him to the Princess Elizabeth Christina of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, who was the niece of the reigning empress.† He writes:—"Thus far my lot has been a tolerably happy one: I have lived quietly in my garrison: my flute, my books, and a few affectionate friends have made my way of life there suffi-

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Elizabeth Christina, daughter of Lewis Rodolphus Duke of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, and wife of Charles the Sixth, Emperor of Germany.

ciently agreeable. They now want to force me to abandon all this, in order to marry me to the Princess of Bevern *, whom I do not know: my consent has been extorted, which, however, was very painful to me. Must one always be tyrannised over, without any hope of a change. Still, if my dear sister were only here, I should endure all with patience." † Frederic had determined upon this marriage for his son, in order at once to put an end to the queen's projects for marrying him to an English princess.

Elizabeth Christina, only daughter of Ferdinand Albert, duke of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel, who became the wife of Frederic the Great, was a princess adorned with all the virtues that most dignify human nature; religious, benevolent, charitable, affectionate, of the strictest and most irreproachable conduct herself, yet indulgent and forgiving for the faults of others. Her whole life was passed in fulfilling the circle of her duties, and, above all, in striving without ceasing, to act in the way that she thought would be most pleasing to her husband, whom she respected, admired, and even loved, in spite of his constant neglect of her. The Princess of Bareith

* In 1732, when Frederic's marriage took place, the father of Elizabeth Christina was still Duke of Brunswick Bevern: in 1735 he succeeded his father-in-law Lewis Rodolphus in the Duchy of Brunswick Wolfenbuttel.

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

informs us, that her education had been sadly neglected *: her mind was certainly by no means an enlarged one. Her person at the time of her marriage is thus described:—"The princess royal is tall: her figure is not a light one. She carries herself forward, which gives her an awkward air: her skin is most brilliantly white, and this whiteness is set off by a very fresh colour: her eyes are of a pale blue, and their expression does not betoken much cleverness: her mouth is small: all her features are delicate, without being really handsome; and the *ensemble* of her face is so pretty and so infantine, that one would think it belonged to a child of twelve years old. Her hair is of a light colour, and curls naturally: but all her beauties are disfigured by her teeth, which are black and ill-arranged. She has no manner at all, and a good deal of difficulty in expressing herself, and making herself understood; one is therefore obliged to divine what she wishes to say, which is very embarrassing." †

The queen, who had always, on account of her English views, been inimical to the idea of the Brunswick marriage, as it approached, transferred her dislike to the person of the princess; of which, as well as of her mind, she was accustomed to express the most contemptuous opinions. The following conversation, as related

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith. † Ibid.

by the Princess of Bareith, may serve to give an idea of the manner, in which the royal family of Berlin regarded the princess who was about to be so nearly allied to them, as well as of the style of conversation, which was permitted at that court:—

"The queen, at supper, turned the conversation to the future princess royal. 'Your brother,' said she to me, but looking all the time towards him, 'is in despair at marrying her; and he is not wrong: she is an actual fool, and can only answer whatever is said to her by a Yes or a No, accompanied by a silly laugh, which is painful to hear.' 'Oh!' said my sister Charlotte, 'your majesty is not yet aware of all her merit. I was one morning at her toilet, and I thought that I should have been suffocated by the dreadful smell; I think she must have ulcers about her person, for it cannot be natural to her. I remarked also that she is deformed: her gown is stuffed on one side, and she has one hip higher than the other.' I was much astonished at this discourse, which was held in the presence of the domestics and in that of my brother. I perceived that he changed colour, and that it appeared painful to him. He retired immediately after supper, and I did the same. He came to see me a moment afterwards. I asked him whether he was satisfied with the king? he replied, that his situation changed every minute; that

at one time he was in favour, and at another in disgrace; but that his great happiness was when he was absent from court; that he then led a pleasant and tranquil life with his regiment; that his studies and his music then formed his principal occupations; that he had built a house, and made a charming garden, where he could read and walk.

I begged him to tell me if the portrait which the queen and my sister had made of the Princess of Brunswick was a true one? 'We are alone,' replied he, 'and I have no concealments from you: I will speak to you with sincerity. The queen, by her intrigues, is the sole source of our misfortunes. Scarcely were you gone, before she recommenced her communications with England. She wished to substitute for you my sister Charlotte, and to contrive her marriage with the Prince of Wales. You may easily imagine that she used every effort for the success of her plan, and also to marry me to the Princess Emily. The king was informed of this design from its commencement, the Ramen (who is more in favour with the queen than ever) having betrayed it to him. The king was much nettled at these fresh intrigues, which have caused many quarrels between the queen and him. Seckendorff finally took part in the affair, and counselled the king to make an end of all these plans, by concluding my marriage with the Princess of Bruns-

it does not appear that she accompanied him to Rupin and Rheinsberg, where he resided principally during the latter part of his father's reign. After his accession to the throne, we are told, he only went to see her once a year, on her birthday; which was also the only day in the year, on which, to do honour to her, he took off his boots, and appeared in stockings. "He kept for this occasion," says Thiebault, "a pair of black silk stockings, which, being not fastened up by garters, generally hung in great wrinkles down his legs." *

The queen, for the most part, held her quiet little court at Berlin; sometimes also at Charlottenburg; but so completely separated was she from her husband, that, from the time she became queen, she was never once at Potsdam; nor did she ever, during her whole life, see the new or the old palace of Sans Souci. This entire neglect of her, naturally led the world to suppose that Frederic disliked his wife; but his estrangement from her, would appear rather to have proceeded from an objection to the society of the sex in general, than from any want of personal regard towards herself. On the contrary, on more than one occasion, he appears to have shewn much anxiety for her welfare; more particularly during an illness of her's, when

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

an issue, which had remained open for several years in one of her legs, suddenly closed in an alarming manner. Frederic, at Potsdam, being made acquainted with this circumstance, immediately sent a chasseur to the Doctor Musselius with the following note, written with his own hand: — "Sir, I learn with extreme grief that her majesty the queen is ill, and that her illness is liable to become serious, and even dangerous, unless immediate remedies are applied to it. I recommend you, in consequence, to see her without delay, and to unite with yourself the two other physicians of Berlin, in whose talents and knowledge you have the most confidence, in order to administer to her all the assistance your art is master of. Remember, above all, that it is question here of the person the most necessary to the state, to the poor, and to me."* This respectable princess survived her husband many years, and died at extreme old age.

The marriage of Frederic was followed by several fêtes, which appear to have been as tedious as they were fatiguing. The following one, described by the Princess of Bareith, was, perhaps, the most disastrous, and certainly the most singular of all: —

"The next day there was a great promenade. We were all in phaetons, dressed out in

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

our best. All the nobility followed in carriages, of which there were eighty-five. The king, in a berline, led the procession: he had ordered, beforehand, the round we were to take, and very soon fell asleep. There came on a tremendous storm of wind and rain; in spite of which we continued our procession at a foot's-pace. It may easily be imagined what a state we were in: we were as wet as if we had been in the river; our hair hung about our ears, and our gowns and head-dresses were destroyed. We got out at last, after three hours rain, at Monbijou, where there was to be a great illumination and ball. I never saw any thing so comical as all these ladies, looking like so many Xantippes, and with their dresses sticking to their persons. We could not even dry ourselves, and were obliged to remain all the evening in our wet clothes."*

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

CHAPTER VII.

FREDERIC'S MANNER OF LIFE AND AMUSEMENTS AT THIS TIME:— HIS IMPROVEMENTS AT RHEINSBERG. — HE RECEIVES PECUNIARY ASSISTANCE FROM SECKENDORFF:— ALSO FROM RUSSIA, AND THE DUKE OF COURLAND.— FREDERIC'S LETTERS TO SUHM. — THE KING ATTACKED BY APOPLEXY, BUT RECOVERS. — DEATH OF THE KING OF POLAND. — FREDERIC WILLIAM IN PERSON ASSISTS THE EMPEROR WITH 10,000 MEN. — CAMPAIGN UNDER PRINCE EUGENE. — PEACE CONCLUDED IN 1735. — THE KING RETURNS HOME IN ILL-HEALTH.— FREDERIC GOES TO STETTIN AND KONIGSBERG:— HIS EMPLOYMENT OF HIS TIME AT RHEINSBERG.

Upon the occasion of his marriage, the king gave to Frederic the county of Rupin, whither he went almost immediately to reside. At first his abode was the town of Rupin, but shortly afterwards the king bought for him a country-house at Rheinsberg, a village a few miles from Rupin. Here Frederic established himself with his friends, and continued to reside, except when called away by duties, during the remainder of his father's life. Among his amusements, during the years he spent at Rheinsberg, one of the principal was the embellishment of the place. When he first came to it, he found it in a dreadful state of neglect and dilapidation; nor was the prospect of improvement cheering, for the

soil on all sides consisted of that barren sand, which forms so large a part of the territories of Brandenburgh. With much expense and trouble soil was brought, and beautiful gardens were formed; while the house, which at Frederic's arrival showed no appearance of taste or comfort, was rebuilt upon a classical model. When finished, it bore upon its pediment the following words: "Frederico tranquillitatem colenti;" * an inscription which excited the highest displeasure in Frederic William, who, little aware of the real character of his son, imagined that he saw in his refined habits and literary tastes, the signs of an indolent and luxurious reign, which would be the ruin of the artificial power of the house of Prussia. "When I am dead," said he, "you will see Berlin full of madmen and free-thinkers, and the sort of people who walk about the streets, such as my mother and grandmother† loved."

To walk about the streets was, it should be mentioned, a heinous crime in the eyes of Frederic William, as proving a disposition to idleness in the person so offending. If he met a woman in the streets, he was accustomed to abuse her for her idleness, and to order her home to take care of her family: if a priest, he

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Henrietta of Orange-Nassau.

caned him: if any body else, of whatever degree, he for the most part had them taken up, and placed as private soldiers in one of his regiments. In consequence, whenever his approach was discovered, the whole population fled before him, and hid themselves wherever they were able.*

The very moderate allowance of money allotted by Frederic William to his son's support, would not, as may be supposed, have sufficed for the improvements of Rheinsberg, or even for the necessary expenses of his establishment: but it appears that he had other sources of income. As early as the year 1732 we find him, through the intervention of Seckendorff, receiving sums of money from the Empress of Germany; who, being a princess of the house of Brunswick, and aunt of the wife of Frederic, was, probably for those reasons, made use of as the channel of communication between Frederic and the emperor. This apparently was the first money he had received from foreign courts. The Princess of Bareith informs us, that one day her brother said to her, "'Seckendorff sometimes sends me money, of which I have great need. I have already taken measures that he should also procure some for you. My *Galleons* arrived yesterday, and I will divide their con-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

tents with you.' In fact, he brought me next day a thousand crowns, assuring me that he would afterwards send me still more. I made considerable difficulties in accepting them, not wishing to be a burthen to him. He shrugged his shoulders, and said to me, 'Take them boldly, for the empress sends me as much money as I wish; and I assure you, that by this means I get rid of the demon of poverty, as soon as I find him approaching me.' 'The empress then,' replied I, 'is a better exorcist than other priests?' 'Yes,' replied he; 'and I promise you that she will send away your demon as well as mine.'"*

Subsequently we find, that Frederic frequently received sums of money, under the name of loans, from the Empress Anne of Russia, and her favourite, Biren duke of Courland. Upon this subject there are considerable details in the correspondence of Frederic with Suhm. Suhm had been for some years minister plenipotentiary at Berlin, from Augustus the Second, King of Poland; during which time he gained the friendship of Frederic. He afterwards filled the same office at the court of Petersburgh, and was then employed by Frederic, as his agent in procuring for him the loans he had occasion for. Suhm appears to have been a man of an amiable disposition, some talents, and considerable cul-

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

tivation; and entirely devoted to Frederic. He died almost immediately after Frederic's accession to the throne, just as he was preparing to attach himself entirely to his service.

In the correspondence, before mentioned, between Frederic and Suhm, the loans of money from Biren to the former are frequently alluded to, under the names of books. Thus Frederic writes, on the 22d of January 1737:—"You do not content yourself with being useful to me in matters of philosophy," (this alludes to his translation of Wolff,) "you wish to be equally so in history. *The Life of Prince Eugene*, which is both a useful and proper work for young men of my age, will give me much pleasure. As you have so kindly charged yourself with sending me this book, I shall take no trouble myself, not even with respect to the binding, which I am sure you will also take care of; as well as of having it well packed up, in order that the wet may not get to the books and the prints, which would be spoiled by it. I should much wish, my dear *Diaphanes*, to be able in my turn to furnish a well-chosen library for you, who know how to make such an excellent use of it." * Here, as will be perceived, *The Life of Prince Eugene* is the sum of money. *Diaphanes* was a familar

* Correspondance familiere et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

name given by Frederic to Suhm. We shall see, when we come to treat of the society at Rheinsberg, that he was fond of giving classical and poetical names to his friends. The loans from Russia did not arrive so rapidly as the necessities of Frederic required, for we find him again, on the 23d of March 1737, alluding to the same subject: "I am at the end of my reading, and am waiting with great impatience for *The Life of Prince Eugene.* Some one, the other day, summoned me to give him an extract from it; I excused myself as well as I could, upon the ground that the original was not yet in my hands; which gave rise to a scene very like that in the 'Joueur,' where Monsieur Galonier and Madame Adam † came to pay him a visit."

In another letter, without date, he says, "Since you are good enough to be my agent in Russia, have the kindness to send me the new edition they are printing there of *The Life of Prince Eugene:* it will be the shortest way, and the best arrangement for sending it; and the agreement with the bookseller is more sure and more to my advantage than that with *the Vienna booksellers,* who print slowly, and give no credit to those who subscribe; and who, in short, do not suit me. I am asked for twelve copies of

* Two characters in the "Joueur," by Regnard.

this book. Those who have commanded them persecute me daily to get them, as if I had a printing-press in my house, and could satisfy them when I pleased. In short, eleven or twelve persons are so mad after *The Life of Prince Eugene*, that they are determined to have it at any price. Judge of my situation: I vow myself to all the saints; and, indeed, without you I should be in a very bad way. Make, then, I beseech you, your agreement with the bookseller; I give you a full power for it: my interests cannot be placed in better hands than yours."*

In this letter, as will be immediately perceived, allusion is made to the money transactions he had before had with the court of Vienna. The *twelve copies* means twelve thousand crowns; and those who had commanded them are his creditors. At length Suhm writes thus on the 28th of May 1737:—"I have received, with an inexpressible joy, the adorable mark of your recollection, which your royal highness has been good enough to give me, in your gracious letter, No. 4. I waited to answer it till the departure of a courier, being anxious to send by the same occasion, the enclosed *Memoirs of the Academy, in three volumes, bound à l'Angloise.* This, Sir, till I can send you the

* Correspondance familiere et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

other work, the bringing out of which I hasten as much as possible."

The three volumes of the Memoirs are three thousand crowns; which, from the well-known habit of England to subsidize all other nations, are not inaptly described as bound in the English manner. It appears, from the mention of the other work, that a second sum was to follow. A great many allusions of the same kind with those already quoted, occur in the correspondence: in some instances those parts of the letters which refer to the loans, are written in cypher, and sometimes in German; and are always accompanied, on the part of Frederic, with thanks to the Duke of Courland for his kindness.

In 1738, it appears that it was suggested to Frederic to receive money direct from the empress, in consequence of the alleged poverty of her favourite. Suhm writes thus on the 21st of March in that year:—"You will receive a packet in May. It will probably be the same sum as last year, as I have not been able to prescribe any change. You may judge how much the duke is anxious to be useful to you, since he makes a great effort for it, having himself the tremendous debts of his predecessors* to pay. It is true that he has a great *resource*. It is *there* without doubt that *you* must think of

* The Dukes of Courland.

drawing for the future. *She* is entirely well disposed to it. She loves and esteems you truly, and will have great pleasure in rendering you service; persuaded as she is, that people who think alike, and whose ideas are noble, may assist one another without its causing any inconvenience." *

The *resource* of Biren was the empress, to whom these paragraphs refer. — It appears that there had been some scruple on the part of Frederic of asking, and on that of the empress of offering assistance, lest the obligation thus incurred to a foreign power, should compromise the duties of the former to his own country. The middle term of a loan from Biren had been therefore resorted to; and we find from the conclusion of the correspondence with Suhm, that one of the first cares of Frederic, when he succeeded his father, was the repayment of the sums of money he had thus borrowed. So that thus far, these transactions bore entirely the appearance of an accommodation between two private individuals.

Frederic's answer to the letter of Suhm, just quoted, shows the continuance of his repugnance to place himself under any obligation to the empress:—"Your letter occasioned me so much embarrassment, that I have taken some

* Correspondance familiere et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

time to answer it. I cannot bring myself to agree to the propositions you make me. The idea of begging for money is diametrically opposite to my views. If I could have remained on the same footing with the duke, I should have been glad of it; but the difference is very great. I can be under an obligation to a duke; but to an empress! only reflect on the consequences!" In the following year, however, his necessities, and the poverty of Biren, seem to have driven him to consent to the propositions of the Russian court.

One cannot help doubting whether the poverty of Biren was not a subterfuge;—for who ever heard of the favourite of a Russian czarina limited in the article of money?—It is also very possible that the empress, in spite of the delicacy and unwillingness which Suhm says she felt of offering money to Frederic, was not unwilling to compel the heir apparent of the throne of Prussia to solicit pecuniary assistance from her; and thus to hold him in complete dependence on the court of Petersburgh.

In December 1739 we find him writing thus to Suhm:—"I will write to the empress as soon as you will send me the model of the letter, with the titles. I must have twenty-four thousand crowns a year. If you can succeed in this, you may take two thousand of them for yourself each year. I hope the agreement will

be concluded by the month of April." * It is probable this agreement was never put into force, in consequence of the death of Frederic William; but that Frederic had humiliated himself sufficiently to consent to it, there can be no doubt.

A fancy, in orthography, of Frederic's, which first appears in his correspondence with Suhm, may be worth mentioning, on account of its singularity. In one of his letters to that correspondent, in the year 1737, he signs *Federic* instead of *Frederic;* a habit he continued during the remainder of his life. The reason of this peculiar spelling, it is impossible now to discover; but it is probable that a greater supposed harmony in the sound may have led to it. It is well known also, that Voltaire, whose acquaintance Frederic had made in the preceding year, was much addicted to such affectations in writing himself; and he may, therefore, very possibly have given the idea of this one to Frederic.

Early in the year 1733, Frederic William had an attack of an apoplectic kind, from which, in a certain degree however, he soon recovered; though his health was by no means so strong as it had previously been. "The king was much changed in the face," observes his daughter, "and his body always swelled at night. One

* Correspondance familiere et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

afternoon while he was asleep, and we all sitting round him, he had a fit. As he always snored excessively, we did not at first perceive it. I was the first to remark, that his face became black and swelled. I immediately gave a scream, and pointed it out to the queen: she pushed him several times to wake him, but without effect. I ran for assistance. We cut open his neckcloth, and threw water on his face; and by degrees he came to himself again."* It is curious to observe, both in this instance, as well as in that of the apopletic fit, before related, which happened to George the First at Berlin, that bleeding under any form does not appear to have been resorted to, or even thought of.

The kind of life, which at this time Frederic William obliged all about him to submit to, is really worth our attention, from the perfection of tediousness, enlivened only by the king's occasional bursts of passion, to which it had arrived; and the degree of actual suffering, which all who came within its circle, were obliged to endure. "The dinner was at mid-day: this repast was bad of its kind, and so insufficient, that no one had enough to assuage their hunger. A buffoon, placed opposite to the king, repeated to him the news of the gazettes, on which he made political reflections,

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

as ridiculous as they were tedious. On leaving the table the king went to sleep in an arm-chair, placed by the side of the fire; the rest were all around him, listening to his snoring. His sleep lasted till three o'clock, when he mounted his horse. At six he returned from his ride, and employed himself in painting, or rather daubing, till seven, after which he smoked. During this time the queen played at tocadille. The supper took place at eight o'clock in her apartments: it always lasted till midnight, and the conversation was like the sermons of certain preachers, which are considered infallible remedies against want of sleep."*

Early in this year died Augustus the Second, King of Poland, whose excesses had early ruined an iron constitution. At the time of his death, he was occupied in the vast and impracticable project of rendering the crown of Poland hereditary in his family. In furtherance of this purpose he had requested the King of Prussia to send his minister Grumkow, to confer with him at Warsaw, who accordingly met him there. "The King of Poland wanted to discover the designs of Grumkow, and the latter those of the king. They made one another drunk reciprocally in this intention, which caused the death of Augustus, and to Grumkow an illness, from

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

which he never entirely recovered."* The death of Augustus occasioned a war, which by degrees extended itself to the whole of Europe. Stanislaus Leczinski again attempted, supported by his son-in-law Lewis the Fifteenth, to establish himself on the throne of Poland, to which he was elected by the unanimous vote of the diet. On the other hand, a few palatins, in the interest of Saxony, withdrew from the diet, and assembling themselves in an inn in the village of Praga, on the other side of the Vistula, elected the son of their late sovereign; whose rights were immediately supported by all the power of the Emperor of Germany and of the Empress of Russia. The envoys of France endeavoured to persuade the King of Prussia to send an armed force into Polish Prussia, and to take possession of it till the re-establishment of peace. But that prudent prince, who saw very well that if he once entered into the war, he might soon be drawn into it much farther than he intended, resolutely adhered to the system of neutrality he had at first laid down to himself: nor was it till the following year, and then very much against his own wishes, that he was compelled, as it were, to take a part in the contest.

The French having violated the territory of

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg.

the empire, by seizing upon the fortress of Kehl, the emperor took advantage of this to oblige the princes of the empire to declare in his favour. Among the rest, he summoned the King of Prussia to assist him with the troops he was bound to furnish, according to the treaty of 1728. Frederic William endeavoured to excuse himself, but without success, and was finally obliged to send ten thousand men to the Rhine, who served during the war under Prince Eugene of Savoy, the emperor's generalissimo. Frederic William, accompanied by his eldest son, soon followed his troops, for he found it impossible to live separated from them; and he was also willing to take this opportunity of making his son acquainted with the realities of war; his knowledge of it thus far having been confined to reviews and manœuvres. The French army, under the command of the Marshal Duke of Berwick, laid siege to Philipsbourg; while Prince Eugene encamped his army at a village called Wiesenthal, within cannon-shot of the French lines. But, says Frederic, there was here "only the shadow of the great Eugene: he had survived himself; and he feared to expose his reputation, so solidly established, to the hazard of an eighteenth battle. A bold young man would have attacked the French entrenchments, which were hardly marked out, when the army arrived at Wiesen-

thal. The French troops were placed so near Philipsbourg, that their cavalry had not space to put itself in order between the town and the camp, without suffering much from our cannonade. It had but one bridge of communication upon the Rhine, and, in case their entrenchments had been taken, all the French army, which had no retreat, must infallibly have perished: but the destiny of empires ordered it otherwise. The French took Philipsbourg in the very sight of Prince Eugene, without any body's opposing them."*

It appears that the King of Prussia endeavoured to persuade Prince Eugene to give battle to the French, in order to succour Philipsbourg; but the latter refused, upon the ground that if he was beat, the whole of Germany would be laid open to the enemy. Probably at an earlier period of his life, he would have won the battle at once, without stopping to

* Mémoires pour servir à l'Histoire de la Maison de Brandebourg. — In one of his conversations with the Prince de Ligne, Frederic ascribed, in part at least, the faults committed by Prince Eugene in this his last campaign, to the evil counsels he received. "When the cabal which, during forty years, Prince Eugene had always had against him in his army, wished to injure him, they took advantage of the moment when his mind, which was in tolerably good order in the morning, had been weakened by the fatigues of the day: it was thus that they made him undertake his injudicious march to Mayence."—Lettres et Pensées du Marechal Prince de Ligne.

consider what would be the effect of losing it. *

Though but little was done this campaign, an opportunity occurred of exhibiting that courageous coolness in the hour of danger, which was part of the nature of Frederic, and which first became known upon the present occasion. He had gone to reconnoitre the lines of Philipsbourg, followed by a considerable number of other persons: passing in his return through a wood, that could be seen through, the cannon of the lines accompanied him without ceasing, and shattered several trees close to him; without occasioning his horse to hasten his pace, and without causing the hand, that held the bridle, to exhibit the slightest nervousness. On the contrary, those who were around him remarked, that he continued to talk with unruffled tranquillity to the generals who accompanied him; and who admired his courage in the midst of a danger, with which he had not yet had an opportunity of being familiarized. †

The Prussian auxiliary troops continued with the imperial army during the campaign of 1735, "which was passed, like that of the preceding year, in eating and drinking." ‡ At the end of

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Correspondance familiere et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

‡ Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

it, peace was concluded between the emperor and France; and the Prussian troops returned home. Frederic William, on leaving the army, had gone to his territory of Cleves, where his dropsical symptoms increased so much upon him, that he was for some time unable to move; and was at length brought to Berlin, with much difficulty, and in a very precarious condition. He suffered great pain. At length his legs, which had been long dreadfully swelled, burst; he was obliged to keep them in buckets, which received the water that flowed from them. A sort of swelling, which he had in one of his legs, gave the surgeons an idea that there was an abscess forming there, and they resolved to make an incision into it. The operation was long and painful, and was borne by the king with heroic firmness; who insisted upon having a looking-glass placed before him, in order that he might the better see what the surgeons were doing. It was thought at this time that the king could not live four and twenty hours; but the event proved otherwise, for he recovered, though not to the degree of health and strength that he had previously possessed.*

It was during the course of this illness, that a scene took place between Frederic William and one of his valets-de-chambre, which was very characteristic of the violence of temper of the for-

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

mer, and at the same time of his devout feelings. One evening, when he was too unwell to read his usual devotions himself, the valet-de-chambre was employed to read them to him. The prayer ended with these words, "*Que Dieu te benisse!*" The servant, not thinking it respectful to *tutoyer* a king, changed the expression, and read "*Que Dieu vous benisse!*" Immediately the pious monarch became exasperated, and, flinging something at the reader's head, cried out, "It is not so; read it over again." The poor man, in his fright, could not conceive what he had done wrong, and read again, "*Que Dieu vous benisse!*" Upon this the king's anger redoubled, and, having nothing else near him, he took off his own night-cap, and threw it in the man's face, crying out, "It is not so; read it over again." The servant, more dead than alive, repeated again, in a low supplicating tone, "*Que Dieu vous benisse!*" "*Te benisse*, rogue," continued the king; "*te benisse.* Do you not know, rogue, that in the eyes of God I am only a miserable rascal like yourself!" *

Frederic left the army on the Rhine shortly after his father; and, on his return to Berlin, was sent by him to Stettin, with the Prince of Anhalt, in order to inspect the fortifications of that town. From thence he went to Konigsberg, to pay a visit to the unfortunate Stanis-

* Vie de Frederic II.

laus Leczinski, who had taken refuge there; after having been a second time driven by the army of the Russians from the throne of Poland, and having defended Dantzic most heroically, but in vain, for above six months. Frederic continued some weeks with him, and contracted a friendship with him, which continued till the death of Stanislaus. He was, after this expedition, permitted to return to Rheinsberg, where he continued to reside for the most part, till he succeeded to the throne; only leaving it, when obliged, in order to visit his father, for the marriages of his sisters, to attend reviews, &c.* During his stay here, he employed himself much in cultivating his mind, and improving his literary tastes. Many of his works, both in poetry and prose, were composed at Rheinsberg. Of these more will be said, after some account has been first given of his way of life; of the friends he collected round him; and of his correspondence with different literary characters.

During the whole time of his stay at Rheinsberg, Frederic was accustomed to devote his mornings to study and composition. At that time it was universally thought, by those who surrounded him, that, when he became sovereign, his character would be only distinguished by amiability in society, by abandonment to pleasure, and by a love of show and magnificence. Yet

* Vie de Frederic II.

those who came the nearest to his person, ought to have judged otherwise of him, from this singular and striking circumstance; namely, that the prince never left his apartment, nor received any one in it, before mid-day: it was known, however, that he rose very early. How did he then occupy himself when alone during six or seven consecutive hours? This was what his attendants could not divine, and he never made any confidences upon the subject. It was discovered afterwards, that it was these hours that he devoted, without interruption, to his studies, and to his correspondence with Rollin, D'Argens, Voltaire, Wolff, and so many others. No one at the time imagined this.*

It was at Rheinsberg that he first contracted the habit of early rising, in order to have more time for his various occupations. He writes thus to Suhm, in 1736: "Having not been quite well lately, my surgeon has advised me to take more exercise than I have hitherto done, which has obliged me to mount my horse, and to take a trot and a gallop every morning. But, in order not to be obliged on that account to change my ordinary way of life, I get up earlier, in order to regain on the one hand what I lose on the other." † He now usually rose between

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† Correspondance familière et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

five and six o'clock: subsequently, when he came to the throne, and had more to do, he fixed four o'clock as his hour of rising. Upon one occasion, while he was with the army on the Rhine, he, together with several of his companions, formed the impossible project of existing entirely without sleep, that they might thus live double the time of other men. For four days and four nights they contended successfully against the approaches of slumber, assisted by strong coffee taken in great abundance. At the end of that time, however, entire exhaustion came upon them, and obliged them to give up the contest.

After the morning studies of Frederic at Rheinsberg, the rest of the day was devoted to society, to music, and amusements of various kinds. The best idea of his way of life, as well as some knowledge of those who were his companions in it, will be gained by a reference to some of his own letters. In August 1736, he writes to Suhm:—"I am about to retire into my beloved solitude, where I shall give full course to my studies. Wolff, as you may believe, will keep his place in them; the Sieur Rollin will have his hours; and the rest will be consecrated to the gods of tranquillity and of repose. A certain poet, of whom you have probably heard, and perhaps read some of his works, Gresset, is coming to see me; and with him the Abbé Jor-

dan, Keyserling, Fouquet, and the Major Stille. By what fatality, my dear Diaphanes, are we separated; and why cannot we, together at Rheinsberg, see our days pass tranquilly in the midst of truth and innocence."*

Again, in October of the same year, he writes: — "I think that you will not be sorry, if I say a few words to you respecting our rural amusements; for, with persons who are dear to us, we love to enter even into the smallest details. We have divided our occupations into two classes, of which the first consists of what is useful, and the second of what is agreeable. I reckon in the list of the usefuls, the study of philosophy, history, and languages; the agreeables are music, the tragedies and comedies which we represent, the masquerades and the presents which we give. The serious occupations, however, have always the prerogative of going before the others; and I think I can say, that we make a reasonable use of our pleasures, only indulging in them to relieve the mind, and to prevent moroseness and too much philosophic gravity, which is apt not to yield a smile even to the graces." And again, "We pass our time here as smoothly and as agreeably as possible. Our company is very pleasant, and our hours are well divided and occupied."†

* Correspondance familière et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

† Ibid.

In the following year he describes himself as enjoying, in his retreat, much tranquillity and happiness, and as looking with unfeigned contempt upon the agitations of the rest of the world. "I set off on the 25th to return to my dear garden at Rupin. I burn with impatience to see again my vineyards, my cherries, and my melons; and there, tranquil and free from all useless cares, I shall live really for myself. I become every day more avaricious of my time, of which I render an account to myself, and never lose any of it without much regret. My mind is now wholly turned towards philosophy: that study renders me wonderful services, which are repaid by me with affection. I find myself happy, because I am much more tranquil than formerly; my soul is much less agitated with violent and tumultuous emotions. I suppress the first impulses of my passions, and do not proceed to act upon them, till after having well considered the question before me."—"I am returned from Cleves, and am now a peaceable inhabitant of Remusberg,* applying myself to study, and reading almost from morning till night. With regard to the news of the world, you will learn them better through the gazetteers than through me. They contain the history of the madness and folly of the great, the wars of some, the quarrels of others, and the

* A name given by Frederic to Rheinsberg.

childish amusements of all. These news are as little worthy the attention of a man of sense, as the quarrels of rats and mice would be."

Upon another occasion he dwells with much complacency upon his continual and uninterrupted studies; and, as the fruit of them, dispatches to his correspondent an ode addressed to the Deity. "During the four months that I have been here, I have never ceased studying. I consider it a duty to employ my time well, and to derive as much benefit from it as I am able. As I wish to communicate to you some of my amusements, I venture to send you an ode, of which the subject has been no small assistance to me in composing it. Once more, my dear Diaphanes, excuse my follies, and regard this ode with some indulgence: it is not to extort your approbation, but to give you an account of my amusements, that I send it to you." *

From these extracts we may judge of the delight of Frederic at finding himself at liberty, in his retreat, to follow his own pursuits; a delight which of course was increased, from the contrast of the misery and slavery he underwent, whenever he was obliged to be in attendance upon his father. Frederic William did not, however, always leave his son in peace at Rheinsberg;

* Correspondance familière et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

frequent were his threats of dispersing the joyous society assembled there, whom he called a set of French coxcombs; but his anger was always diverted by the good discipline of Frederic's regiment, who, in the midst of his pleasures and his studies, had the good sense never to forget the duties of a corporal, and thus warded off every storm which impended over him from the violent temper of his father.

We are told that, upon one occasion, Frederic William determined to surprise his son, and to see with his own eyes how he passed his time. For this purpose he set off one morning very early from Potsdam, without having given notice of his journey, and went straight to Rupin, where the prince's regiment was quartered, intending to go from thence to Rheinsberg, which is in the neighbourhood, to dinner; expecting to find, and to surprise his son at the latter place. On arriving by times at Rupin, he found Frederic there, exercising his regiment. His astonishment and pleasure at this were equal; and it is said, that from this moment he began to entertain a more favourable opinion of his son.* It is supposed that Frederic had been secretly informed very early in the morning of his father's intention, and had taken his measures in consequence.

Upon another occasion Frederic William ap-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

pears to have been again displeased with his son, but to have been appeased by means of the same kind. Frederic writes thus to Suhm: — "There have been latterly some fresh quarrels; the whole proceeding from a jealousy, which Bredow * has against Wolden. The first found means to insinuate to the king that I was a man without religion; that Manteuffel and you had contributed much to corrupt me; and that Wolden was a madman, who acted the buffoon to our society, and was my favourite. You know that the accusation of irreligion is the last refuge of calumniators, and that that once asserted, nothing more need be said. The king took fire; but I remained tranquil and silent. My regiment did wonders; and the manual exercise, a little flour sprinkled upon the heads of the soldiers, men above six feet high, and a good many recruits, have proved arguments stronger than those of my calumniators. All is quiet at present, and no more is said of religion, of Wolden, of my persecutors, nor of my regiment." † It is to be feared, however, that the charge of irreligion brought by Frederic William against his son and his companions, was but too well founded.

* Bredow had been one of the governors of the prince royal, and was still attached to his person. Wolden was also one of his attendants.

† Correspondance familière et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHARACTERS OF THE COMPANIONS OF FREDERIC: — KEYSERLING — JORDAN — KNOBELSDORF — MAJOR STILLE — LA MOTTE FOUQUET. — VISITS OF FREDERIC WILLIAM TO RHEINSBERG. — FREDERIC INSTITUTES A SOCIETY CALLED "THE FRIENDS OF TRUTH." — MANTEUFFEL AND WOLFF. — SOCIETY OF "THE KNIGHTS OF BAYARD." — CORRESPONDENCE OF FREDERIC WITH CELEBRATED AUTHORS. — ACCOUNT OF HIS EARLY WRITINGS. — HE ACCOMPANIES HIS FATHER TO CLEVES AND THE HAGUE. — HE BECOMES A FREEMASON. — FREDERIC WILLIAM'S LAST ILLNESS AND DEATH: — HIS FUNERAL.

It may here be proper to give some account of the associates of Frederic, at this period of his life, as far as any can be collected from the memoirs and letters of the time. The principal of them were, Keyserling, Jordan, Chasot, Knobelsdorf, Major Stille, and Fouquet. The character of Keyserling* has been before given, and it may therefore, perhaps, be only necessary here to add, that he continued to enjoy the intimate friendship of Frederic till his death, which happened in

* Page 64.

1746, upon which occasion Frederic consecrated a poem, full of the most affectionate expressions, to his memory.*

Jordan was descended from one of the many French families settled at Berlin, studied theology at Geneva, and returned to his native country to take orders. He became the curate of a village near Rheinsberg, and this led to the first acquaintance between him and Frederic; an acquaintance which soon ripened into friendship. On his accession to the throne, Frederic persuaded Jordan to abandon the ecclesiastical profession; in return for which he made him his librarian and a privy counsellor, both of which situations he enjoyed till his death, in 1745. Frederic also asked him what sum, by way of pension, would make him perfectly comfortable, and leave him nothing farther to wish for. Jordan had the moderation to name two thousand francs a year, (about £80 sterling,) which was given him, and he never again asked for any favour.† Jordan appears to have been a man of amiable disposition, great learning, and considerable talents. He was the author of several works, both in Latin and French, which are now forgotten. He loved, almost adored, his royal master, yet never flattered him; and was

* "Aux manes de Cæsarion."—Œuvres de Frederic II.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

accustomed to give him his advice freely upon all subjects, which the king always took in good part. In return, Frederic placed the most unbounded confidence in him, and entertained the greatest respect for his opinion. The friendship of Frederic with Jordan, upon the terms of equality which belonged rather to two private individuals than to a sovereign and his subject, and which, in spite of this singular circumstance, was never clouded by the slightest coldness, was never abused by the one, nor repressed by the other, is one of the most honourable circumstances in the life of Frederic. — "It is not the king that I love in him," said Jordan sometimes; "it is the man. If I considered the dignity and the power of the king, I should only seek to keep myself at a distance from him: but the qualities that are personal to him, both of the heart and the head—it is those which attach me to him for life, without reserve and without fear."* Frederic repaid these real and sincere feelings of attachment, by the most tender and devoted attention to him during his last illness, which was one of great length and suffering; and continued to show his affection for him, by subsequent acts of kindness to his family. During the decline of Jordan's health, Frederic used, when at Berlin, to come every

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

day to pass at least an hour in his chamber; when he always desired to be left alone with his friend; saying to those who attended him, "Do not be afraid of leaving us alone together: I will attend upon him, and serve him with any thing he wants; it will be exactly the same, as if you waited on him yourselves."

That Jordan, like the rest of the friends of Frederic, was deficient in religious feelings, and even gave into the prevalent habit in the society of Potsdam, of turning serious subjects into ridicule, there can, we fear, be no doubt: but it is pleasing to find, that, during his last illness, his ideas upon this subject underwent a change, which he had the manliness to avow to the king. In April 1745, he writes, "My complaint increases so much, that I no longer even hope to recover from it. I feel strongly, in the situation in which I at present find myself, the necessity of an enlightened religion, arising from conviction. Without that, we are the beings upon the earth the most to be pitied. Your majesty will, after my death, do me the justice to testify, that if I have combated superstition with vehemence, I have always supported the interests of the Christian religion, though differing from the ideas of some theologians. As it is only possible when in danger to discover the necessity of bravery, so no one can really have

the consoling advantage of religion except through sufferings."*

Chasot was a native of Normandy: in 1734 he served as an officer in the French army on the Rhine, and there made acquaintance with Frederic, who, though under the orders of Prince Eugene, had received permission to inspect the troops of the enemy. Frederic subsequently persuaded Chasot to abandon the service of his native country, and to establish himself with him at Rheinsberg. After his accession to the throne, Chasot followed his master to the field, and distinguished himself upon many occasions, particularly at the battle of Hohenfriedberg. Frederic afterwards procured for him the military government of Lubeck. Chasot appears to have been a man of considerable talents; but our accounts of him and of his character are very meagre and unsatisfactory.

Knobelsdorf, who also formed one of the habitual society of Rheinsberg, was distinguished as a musician and an architect. In the latter capacity, for which his genius alone, without the aid of education, had fitted him, he designed the fine opera house at Berlin, which Frederic built at the commencement of his

* Œuvres posthumes de Frederic II.

reign; as well as some others of the public buildings of that city. Stille and La Motte Fouquet were both military men, and subsequently rose to eminence in the armies of Frederic.

On these friends and associates Frederic was in the habit of conferring appellations, which either appeared to him more classical or more appropriate than their real ones. This fancy he probably took from the literati of Germany and Holland, who, as is well known, have been at all times very fond of these changes of name. Thus, in writing to Suhm, Frederic almost always addresses him as *Diaphanes*: Keyserling is called *Cæsarion*; Jordan is latinized into *Jordanus*; and even Rheinsberg is changed into *Remusberg*. At a later period in his life, he metamorphosed the Colonel Guichard into *Quintus Icilius*.

With these friends, and occasionally a few others, Frederic passed his time. Frederic William also not unfrequently visited his son at Rheinsberg, and delighted much in partaking of his good dinners and excellent wine. Of the pleasures of good living he was at all times susceptible, whenever they could be indulged in at the cost of others. Frederic was occasionally, also, troubled with other unwelcome visitors; as appears from the following letter to Suhm, writ-

ten in 1736:—"Tantalus never suffered so much while standing in the river, the waters of which he could not drink, as I, when, having received your packets of the translation of Wolff, I was unable to read them. All the accidents and all the bores in the world were, I think, agreed to prevent me. A journey to Potsdam, daily reviews, and the arrival of my brother, in company with the Sieurs De Hacke and De Rittberg, have been my impediments. Imagine my horror, my dear Diaphanes, at seeing the arrival of this caravan, without my having in the least expected them. They weigh upon my shoulders like a tremendous burthen, and never quit my side; in order, I believe, to make me wish myself at the devil. A conversation about heights and measures and feet is soon exhausted; and, when this is finished, I see myself *à sec*, like Boileau, *aux bords du Leck*. What could I do next? I bethought myself, and it seemed to me a very good idea to take them into my garden, the whole of which I had had illuminated, as well as the temple. I also had some fireworks there; and in other respects entertained them as well as I was able. As they are persons who think much more of their physical, than of their moral existence; or, to speak more intelligibly, as they know more of their stomachs than their minds, I entertained them with a chapter

of the philosophy of Duval *, who performed wonders.†

At this period he joined with the Count Manteuffel in forming a society called, "The Friends of Truth," whose professed object was to defend and support the principles of Wolff's philosophy, which, as well as their author, had incurred the severest displeasure of Frederic William. The Count Manteuffel was a man of considerable talents and instruction: by birth a Saxon, he had been at one moment first minister of Augustus the Second, King of Poland, in which situation he was succeeded by Count Bruhl. He afterwards retired to the court of the Prince of Prussia, where he passed some years; and finally died at Leipsick. Christian Wolff was born at Breslau, and early distinguished himself by his philosophical and mathematical acquirements, in consequence of which he obtained the post of professor of mathematics in the university of Halle; and was by the King of Prussia made a privy counsellor. In the midst of this prosperity, he raised a storm against himself, by delivering a Latin oration in favour of the morality of the Chinese; which was supposed, by the theologians of Halle, to reflect on their own. This took place in 1721, and from that moment

* Frederic's cook.

† Correspondance familiere et amicale de Frederic II, Roi de Prusse, avec U. F. de Suhm.

a persecution commenced against Wolff, which ended in an order from Frederic William, in November 1723, denouncing the punishment of death against him, unless he quitted the Prussian states within twenty-four hours.*

The theologians had got possession of the king's ear, who, at their request, appointed a commission to decide upon the merits of the case; and the result of their report was the order, which has just been mentioned. Whether the judgment was an equitable one, or not, must have been entirely the effect of chance, as Frederic William appointed two general officers as his commissioners, who certainly were entirely guiltless of any knowledge of theology or metaphysics.

The young Frederic, on the other hand, espoused the cause of Wolff with great warmth; entered into a correspondence with him; and formed, in conjunction with Manteuffel, the society of "Friends of Truth," for the dissemination of his philosophical principles. At his request also, his friend Suhm translated into French the metaphysical works of Wolff. Subsequently, his persuasions induced the king to reverse the sentence against Wolff, and to offer him the vice-chancellorship of the university of Halle; but the philosopher, taught by experi-

* Chalmer's Biographical Dictionary; article Wolff.

ence, refused to trust himself again in the dominions of a prince, who made his generals judges of philosophy and theology. He did not, in consequence, return till the accession of Frederic to the throne, when he was made vice-chancellor, and, subsequently, chancellor of Halle. Frederic William had only been dead a few days, when Frederic wrote with his own hand to Reinbech, his resident at the court of the Landgrave of Hesse Cassel, in whose territories Wolff was then residing :—"I entreat you to give all the attention possible to the affair of Wolff. A man who seeks after and cherishes truth, deserves to be honoured in all human societies; and if you can persuade Wolff to return to us, I shall consider this success as a conquest you have gained in the empire of truth."* Wolff was the author of sixty separate treatises, in Latin and German, on metaphysical and mathematical subjects, and was, undoubtedly, a philosopher of considerable eminence; though he has been often accused, and with justice, of drowning the truths he attempted to establish in a deluge of words.

Among the other amusements of Frederic at Rheinsberg was the institution of a society, who called themselves "Knights of Bayard," and whose principal occupation was the elucidation

* Buschings Beschreibung seiner Reisen nach Kyritz.

of the art of war and of tactics, and the study of the campaigns and operations of the most celebrated ancient and modern heroes. It was in the capacity of a knight of this order, that Frederic composed his "Reflections on the Method of making War against the Austrians," and his "Considerations on the military Qualities of Charles the Twelfth." He sent both these works to the General La Motte Fouquet, who was grand master of the order. The order of the Knights of Bayard was composed of twelve knights, who each, at their reception, chose a particular name, under which they were known in the registers of the order; such as "the Chaste," "the Sober," "the Constant:" the latter was the appellation of Frederic. The badge was a sword placed upon a crown of laurel, with the motto round it, "Without fear and without reproach."

Judging from the numerous letters of Frederic, written while he was prince royal, which have come down to us, a considerable part of his time must have been occupied in his correspondence with men of learning, science, and talent. Among those who were thus honoured, may be mentioned Wolff, Rollin, S'Gravesande, Fontenelle, Maupertuis, D'Argens, Algarotti, and Voltaire. A great portion of the letters on both sides were filled with flatteries, which, in fact, meant nothing. Frederic was, however,

charmed with the compliments paid him by such eminent literary characters; and they, on the other hand, could never say enough to express their gratitude for incense bestowed by a royal highness. In one of his letters to Voltaire, Frederic carries his adulation to that author so far, as to express his profane belief "that there can be in nature but one God and one Voltaire." Nor is this the only instance of profaneness which occurs in the early letters of Frederic to Voltaire. It is painful to observe some passages of the most anti-christian tendency scattered through them;—painful on account of the writer of them; for, buried as they are in a long and tedious correspondence, they are quite innocent of the power of doing harm to others.

Several of the works of Frederic, both in prose and verse, were written in his retreat of Rheinsberg. Of the former, the principal one is the "Anti-Machiavel," a laboured refutation of "The Prince" of Machiavel. It contains some good writing, and many admirable sentiments, but never has, and probably never will be much read. It was corrected by Voltaire as it advanced, who also undertook to get it published in Holland, without the name of the author. His "Considerations on the Character of Charles the Twelfth" were also written at this period; and the "Considerations on the present Political State of Europe" bear the date of 1736. Of

his poetry, the first, in point of time, appears to have been an "Ode to Glory," which bears the date of 1734. There is also a copy of verses composed during Frederic's campaign on the Rhine in the same year. Several of his epistles, odes, and other pieces of poetry were also evidently written before the year 1740, but the exact time of their composition is not known. Upon the whole it would appear, that his style both in prose and poetry, at this period, was considerably inferior to that which he afterwards attained to, when he had profited by the lessons and corrections of Voltaire, and had obtained a more accurate and extensive knowledge of the powers of the French tongue. The fondness of Frederic for composition in this language is certainly singular, as it is evident that he never felt himself perfectly at home in it, or as a man does in his native tongue. Yet he certainly enjoyed nothing so much as writing French poetry: it was his amusement, and even *his repose,* when his time was most occupied, and his mind the most harassed. "Making verses," said he one day to Thiebault, "is my greatest pleasure; it is a real enjoyment, and a perfect relaxation: other studies, in comparison of this, are only labours." *

In 1738, Frederic accompanied his father in

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

a journey to Cleves, from whence they went on to visit the Prince of Orange at Loo, near the Hague. At the latter place they met the Count de La Lippe, who was a zealous freemason. One day at dinner, the conversation turning upon freemasons, Frederic William abused them as a society of atheists. The count defended them with warmth; and his defence made so much impression on Frederic, that as soon as dinner was over, he took the count aside, and requested him to assist him in becoming one. It was accordingly arranged that he should be received at Brunswick, where they were to stop in their way home: a secret meeting was accordingly convened there for the purpose, and Frederic was admitted a freemason.

Though thus become one of the fraternity, Frederic was not peculiarly favourable to the freemasons during his reign: indeed he appears rather to have discouraged them. Very soon after his father's death he presided at a meeting of them, and in the quality of grand master received as freemasons, his brother the Prince William, the Margrave of Schwedt, and the Duke of Holstein: after this he does not appear to have taken any farther interest in the proceedings of the society.

In the summer of the following year Frederic again took a journey with his father, and together they visited Prussia. The king's mode of

travelling does not appear to have been an agreeable one, if we may judge by a letter from Frederic to Jordan, in which he says, "We have now been travelling near three weeks. The heat is as great, as if we were riding astride upon a ray of the sun; and the dust is like a dense cloud, which renders us invisible to the eyes of the by-standers: in addition to this, we travel like the angels, without sleep, and almost without food. Judge then what my condition must be, &c."* During this journey he also wrote a letter to Voltaire, giving an account of the benefits conferred by the paternal government of Frederic William upon the province of Prussian Lithuania, which it is but justice to the character of that prince, who certainly had no virtues to spare, to quote; and which, besides, is curious, as exemplifying the very singular difference between his manner of treating his provinces and his family,—between his conduct as a king, and his conduct as a father. It is dated from Insterbourg, 27th July 1739.

"My dear friend,

"We are at length arrived, after three weeks' travelling, in a country which I consider as the non plus ultra of the civilized word: it is a province little known in Europe, but which deserves

* Œuvres posthumes de Frederic II.

to be more so, from the circumstance of its having been really a creation of the king my father. Prussian Lithuania is a duchy, full thirty German leagues long, and twenty broad, though it grows narrower on the side of Samogitia. This province was ravaged by the plague at the commencement of the present century, and more than three hundred thousand of the inhabitants perished of the disease, and of wretchedness. The court, ignorant of the misfortunes of the people, neglected to afford assistance to a rich and fertile province, full of inhabitants, and fruitful in all kinds of productions. The disorder carried off the people; and the lands remained uncultivated, and full of weeds. Even the animals were not exempt from this public and universal calamity. In a word, the most flourishing of our provinces was changed into the most miserable of solitudes. Meanwhile Frederic the First died, and with him was buried all his false grandeur, which consisted only in a vain magnificence, and in the pompous display of frivolous ceremonies. My father, who succeeded him, compassionated the general misery. He visited the spot, and saw with his own eyes this vast country laid waste, and all the dreadful traces which a contagious malady, a famine, and the sordid avarice of a venal administration leave behind them. Twelve or fifteen towns depopulated, and four or five hundred villages uninhabited, presented

themselves to his view. Far from being discouraged by such a sad spectacle, his compassion only became the more lively from it; and he resolved to restore population, plenty, and commerce to this land, which had even lost the appearance of an inhabited country. Since this time he has spared no expenses for the furtherance of his salutary intentions. He first established wise regulations and laws; he rebuilt whatever had been allowed to go to ruin, in consequence of the plague; he brought and established there thousands of families from the different countries of Europe. The lands became again productive, and the country again populous; commerce re-flourished; and, at present, abundance reigns in this fertile country more than ever. There are now half a million of inhabitants in Lithuania: there are more towns than formerly; more flocks:—and more riches, and fertility than in any other part of Germany. And all that I have been relating to you is due to the king alone, who not only gave the orders, but himself presided at their execution. He both conceived the designs, and executed them; and spared neither care, nor trouble, nor vast treasures, nor promises, nor recompences, in order to assure the comfort, and the existence of half a million of rational beings, who owe to him alone their happiness and their establishment. There is something in my mind so heroic in the

generous and laborious manner in which the king has devoted himself to the restoring to this deserted country its population, fertility, and happiness, that I think you will see his conduct in the same light as I do, when you are made acquainted with the circumstances of it." *

The career of Frederic William was now drawing to a close: his constant attacks of gout had reduced him almost to the state of a cripple; and, in the beginning of 1740, he was further afflicted with such decided symptoms of dropsy, as left no hopes of his recovery. Towards the end of the month of May, the king grew rapidly weaker and worse; and on the 26th of that month he fell into a lethargy, which lasted so long, that his attendants conceived him to be dead, and dispatched an express with the intelligence to Frederic at Rheinsberg.† The prince, followed by his train of friends and attendants, immediately set off for Potsdam, prepared to take upon himself the reins of government; and his attendants already enjoying in anticipation the rich rewards of their faithful services. What then was the disappointment of all parties, when on their arrival, they found the king still alive. Shortly after the departure of

* Supplement aux Œuvres posthumes de Frederic II.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

the express for Rheinsberg, he had recovered from his lethargy; and the first object that presented itself to the eyes of Frederic, when he entered the palace, was his father already dressed in his uniform, though it was then only four o'clock in the morning, and placed in his chair, in which he was accustomed to be rolled about his apartment. Frederic, at first, thought the messenger had only been sent to deceive him; especially as he found the king talking and gesticulating with as much energy as ever; but this did not continue long.* On seeing the Baron de Poëllnitz approach him, the king said to him, "My friend, it is all over; I am going to leave you." He then ordered himself to be taken into the queen's room, who was still in bed. "Get up," said he to her; "I have not long to live: let me at least have the satisfaction of dying in your arms."† The exercise he had taken did him no good; on the contrary, it only increased his exhaustion, and was followed by another and a longer lethargy.

On his recovery from this, he sent for an ecclesiastic, who prayed with him for some time, and advised him to examine his conscience, and to repent of his sins. He seems not to have spared the king in the examination he made

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

him go through; but, very properly, to have brought forward in detail all the points, upon which Frederic William had the most cause for self-reproach. Thus he requested his majesty to recollect, whether he had not been at times hasty, violent, and severe; whether he had not ill-treated, without cause, his children, and his attendants and servants; whether he had not been too ready to think and believe the worst, and thus to punish wrongfully those, who were innocent; whether his acts of severity had not proceeded, rather from passion and harshness, than from a love of justice; and whether, under the pretext of the general good, he had not rendered miserable many individuals, over whom he had really no authority. To all these accusations the king pleaded guilty with much humility, but at the conclusion of each confession, he always added, "However I have never been unfaithful to my wife, and I trust that God, on account of that, will pardon me the rest." The priest endeavoured to convince him that it was not upon his own merits that he should rely for acceptance; and that, above all, he could have no chance of it, without a sincere and lively repentance.*

On the 29th he dictated his will, and a paper addressed to his eldest son, explaining exactly

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

how he wished to be buried. During the greater part of the 30th he remained in a state of lethargy, in which he still was, when the officer of the day came to receive the watchword for the garrison at Potsdam. His attendants sent the officer to the prince royal, who, however, did not dare to give it. The king recovered his senses at seven o'clock in the evening, and then gave the word, which was his last act of sovereignty.

Early in the morning of the 31st, Frederic William, perceiving his end approaching, took leave of his younger children, but retained about him the queen and Frederic, and summoned to his bed-side his ministers, and all the generals and colonels of regiments then at Potsdam. After having thanked them for their past services, and having exhorted them to continue towards the prince royal that fidelity, which they had shown to him, he went through the ceremony of his abdication, and delivered over all his authority to his son; to whom he made a touching exhortation on the duties of princes towards their subjects, and recommended to him to take care of the army, and, above all, of the generals and officers who were present. Turning then to the Prince of Anhalt, he said to him, "You are the oldest of my generals, and I therefore think it right to give you my best horse." At the same time he ordered that it should be sent to the prince; and

seeing him affected, "This is the lot of men," said he to him; "they must all pay the debt of nature." * Fearing, however, lest his own firmness should be shaken by the tears and lamentations of those present, he ordered them to retire. He then desired that all his servants should appear in a new livery he had had made for them, and that his regiment should put on their new uniforms.

Cochius, one of his chaplains, now asked him whether he was prepared for death. "I have detached my heart," replied the king to him, "from all the objects that were dear to me;—from my wife, my children, my army, my kingdom, and the whole world."—"Then," said the ecclesiastic, "you are truly happy; it is a proof that you love God more than any thing." † Shortly after this the king fainted from exhaustion; but was brought to himself again with some difficulty. He then looked round him, and seeing the servants in their new liveries, he cried out, "Vanity of vanities! all is vanity!" He turned to his physician, and asked him if his end was at hand. The physician having answered him, that he had still half an hour to live, he asked for a looking glass, and having regarded himself, smiled, and said, "I am

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Vie de Frederic II.

much changed; I shall make a villainous face in dying." He again asked the same question of the physicians, who replied, that a quarter of an hour was already gone, and that his pulse began to fail. "So much the better;" said he, "I shall the sooner return to nothing."* He expired about mid-day. † At first his attendants and Frederic were uncertain, whether it was not another lethargy; but the evidences of dissolution became soon so apparent, that no further doubt could be entertained upon the subject.

The new king having conducted his mother back to her apartment, and assisted in comforting her; and having received the oaths of allegiance from the garrison of Potsdam, proceeded to Berlin. To the Baron de Poëllnitz he confided the ordering of every thing for the interment of his father—a trust, which should naturally have honoured and flattered the person to whom it was given; but Frederic managed to express himself in a way so little agreeable to the feelings of the baron, that the latter never either forgot or forgave it. "I give to you," said he, "the charge of directing the obsequies of your former master. No one is more capable of doing it well than yourself. You will observe that it is my intention that

* Mémoires de la Margrave de Bareith.

† Of the 31st of May 1740.

every thing should be done nobly, and in a dignified manner; therefore let nothing be spared, that is necessary for the pomp usual on such occasions. Go to the tradesmen, and order as much black cloth, &c. as you want, and let me have the bills afterwards, to pay them." The baron, upon this, went out to execute his commission; but Frederic followed him to the head of the stairs, and called out after him, "Remember, there must be no cheating—no swindling contrivances: I give you notice beforehand, that, if there are, I will not pardon them!" These last were the words which the baron, very naturally, never could digest.*

The funeral was conducted exactly according to the orders of Frederic William, expressed in the paper before mentioned; and which is in itself so strange a document, and so characteristic of its author, that it must not be omitted. With it shall be concluded the history of Frederic William.

"My dear son,

"This is an instruction, which I leave to you respecting the manner, in which I wish my body to be treated, when the Almighty shall take me from this world.

"1st. As soon as I am dead, my body must

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

be washed, a white shirt must be placed upon it, and it must be afterwards stretched out upon a wooden table; then they must shave me and wash me, and cover me with a sheet. Let them leave me for four hours in this state.

" 2dly. After this my body must be opened, in presence of Lieutenant-General De Buddenbrock, the Colonel Derschau, the Lieutenant-Colonel Ensiedel, the Major Bredow, the Captains Prinzen and Hake, the Lieutenant Winterfeld, all the physicians and surgeons of the regiments in the town, and my valet-de-chambre. They will examine with care into the malady, which has caused my death, and into the state of all the parts of my body. I expressly forbid any part of it to be removed. Care will only be taken to remove, as much as possible, the water and the other humours; after which it will be washed very carefully; then they will dress me in my best clothes with all my decorations; then I am to be placed in my coffin, which is to be plain; and thus I shall be left all night.

" 3dly. I desire, that there be given to the soldiers of my regiment new uniforms, new hats, and their whole dress new. The Captain Lange, and the other officers of the supernumeraries, as well as six subalterns of the third battalion, and all the supernumeraries, shall this day have the guard of the town. The next day my regiment will be assembled, and the batta-

lions will be formed: the first battalion will form in front of the palace; the right wing will be on the side of the river, at the spot where the wall commences; the second battalion will be next to it; and the third behind the second. Let all be in complete order, and let each grenadier have three cartridges. There must be crape placed about the colours, and the drums will be ornamented with black cloth. The fifes and the hautboys will also have crape about them. Every officer will have a piece of crape on his hat, round his arm, and on the hilt of his sword.

"4thly. The funeral car, which will be taken from the stables at Berlin, will be placed towards the *green staircase*, with the heads of the horses turned towards the river. Eight captains of my regiment will carry me to the funeral car; after that they will return each one to his division. These same eight captains will also take me out of the funeral car, and carry me into the church.

"5thly. As soon as the car shall begin to move, the soldiers of my regiment shall place their musquets under the left arm, the drums shall beat the dead march, and the hautboys play the well-known anthem, 'O blessed head, covered with blood and wounds!' After that, the funeral car shall advance as far as the iron gate. There it will stop; and all the regiment will defile before the car. The first battalion will place

itself before the church, the second next to it, and then the third. When all shall have defiled, the body will follow. My two sons, William and Henry, will remain with the regiment. You, as my eldest son, with the little Ferdinand *, will walk in uniform behind the car; as well as all the generals and other officers who shall be present, and who, not belonging to the regiment, shall still wish to follow the procession. The two chaplains, Cochius and Oesfeld, shall follow also, because they belong to my regiment.

" 6thly. Then the body shall be carried into the church by the eight captains of my regiment, whom I have before mentioned; and they will enter at the door, by which I commonly entered the church. Upon the coffin will be placed my handsomest regulation sword, my best scarf, a pair of gilt spurs, and a gilt helmet. All these things will be found in the arsenal. When the captains shall have carried me into the church, in the manner I have before mentioned, the coffin shall be put down at the entrance to the vault; and then my master of the chapel, Ludovici, shall play upon the organ a piece of music, composed by the organist Sidon; and, during this interval, the captains, who carried me, shall return to their divisions. The generals

* His youngest son.

and some of the staff officers will be good enough to render some of the last honours to me, and to carry me into the vault. There will be brought from Berlin twenty-four six-pounders, which will each make twelve discharges singly; then the battalions will fire also; but the artillery is to fire first.

"7thly. I forbid any funeral sermon to be preached over me; but after the firing, the battalions shall be broken, the grenadiers shall carry the colours where you, my son, shall order them, and the companies will march to the quarters of their captains. To every grenadier two-pence will be given, as during the time of the reviews.

"8thly. In the evening a festival will be given, in the great room in the garden, to all the generals, to the officers of my regiment, and to the foreign officers, who shall have been at the ceremony. The best cask of hock which I have in my cellar must be opened; and at this repast good wine alone shall be drank.

"9thly. A fortnight afterwards, a funeral sermon shall be preached for me in all the churches in my territories; of which the text shall be, 'I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith.' They shall preach upon this text in the morning, and afterwards they shall sing the anthem, 'Blessed is he that putteth his trust in the

Lord.' They shall not speak any thing of my life, of my actions, nor any thing personal to me; but they shall tell the people that I confessed my sins, and that I died in full confidence of the goodness of God, and of my Saviour. In general, in these funeral sermons, I do not wish to be made worse than I am, but at the same time I do not wish to be praised.

"10thly. No mourning clothes shall be given to my servants; only they must wear a crape on their hats; and, finally, there shall be no other ceremony on my account, besides the one I have here described. I do not doubt, my very dear son, but that you will execute my last wishes, (which I make known to you here,) faithfully, and with the greatest exactness. I remain, until death, your faithful father and your affectionate king,

"FREDERIC WILLIAM." *

"Potsdam, 29th May 1740."

* Vie de Frederic II.

BOOK THE SECOND.

1740 — 1745.

FROM THE ACCESSION OF FREDERIC TO THE THRONE TILL THE PEACE OF DRESDEN.

CHAPTER I.

CHARACTERS OF THE MINISTERS OF FREDERIC AT HIS ACCESSION. — RESOURCES, &c. OF THE PRUSSIAN STATES. — CHANGE IN FREDERIC'S CHARACTER. — DISTRIBUTION OF HIS TIME AND OCCUPATIONS: — HIS JOURNEYS OF INSPECTION: — HIS FIRST MEETING WITH VOLTAIRE. — SUCCESSION OF BERG AND JULIERS. — DEATH OF THE EMPEROR. — FREDERIC ENTERS SILESIA WITH HIS ARMY. — BLOCKADE OF GLOGAU. — BRESLAU TAKEN BY THE PRUSSIANS. — FREDERIC RETURNS TO BERLIN FOR THE WINTER. — NEGOTIATIONS WITH RUSSIA AND FRANCE. — FREDERIC OPENS THE CAMPAIGN OF 1741. — GLOGAU TAKEN. — BATTLE OF MOLLWITZ. — MISFORTUNE OF MAUPERTUIS.

At the time of the accession of Frederic to the throne, the ministers were, the Count de Podevils, who was considered the chief, and who held the office of first minister for foreign affairs; and the Count de Finckenstein, who was the second, and subsequently succeeded to the place of Podevils.* These personages are

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

mentioned here, once for all, because there will be no necessity to say any thing farther respecting them; as Frederic, by his own activity, and his peculiar way of doing business, soon reduced their offices to mere clerks' places. The chancellor was the Baron de Coccéi, of whom mention will be made, when we come to speak of the *Code Frederic*. He was, after some years, succeeded by M. de Jarriges, who was succeeded by M. de Fürst. When the latter was disgraced, M. de Crammer obtained the office, and held it till the death of Frederic.

At the death of Frederic William, the population of the states under his government consisted of 2,240,000 souls.* The states were the following ones:†

The kingdom of Prussia.

The duchy of Pomerania, with the exception of Swedish Pomerania.

The electoral march or marquisate of Brandenburgh.

The duchy of Crossen, with Cotbus and Peitz, in Lower Lusatia.

The duchy of Magdebourg, with two-fifths of the county of Mansfeld.

The principality of Halberstadt, with the county of Hohnstein.

* Frederic, in his "Histoire de mon Temps," calls the population three millions, which is an over-statement.

† Vie de Frederic II.

The principality of Minden.
The duchy of Cleves.
The principality of Moeurs.
The county of the Mark and Ravensberg.
The duchy of Gelders.
The county of Tecklenberg and Lingen.
The lordship and bailiwick of Montfort, in the Upper Gelders.
The territory of Turnhout, in Brabant.
The barony of Herstal.
The lordships of Orange, Polder, Thaaldierge, Wateringen, Higher and Lower Schwaluve, Little Waspic, Twintig, Horven, Honderland, and Gravesande.*

The annual revenues of the Prussian states, in 1740, amounted to seven millions four hundred thousand crowns; and the savings of Frederic William to eight millions seven hundred thousand crowns.† The finances were well administered, but the resources of the country and of the treasury were few. Though the late king had done all in his power to encourage it, commerce was far from being in a flourishing condition.

* These lordships were all part of the succession of the House of Orange, which came to the king of Prussia, upon the death of William the Third of England.

† If we take the Prussian crown, or rix-thaler, as worth three shillings and sixpence of our money, the result will be, that the income of Prussia amounted to 1,295,000*l.*, and the treasure to 1,522,500*l.*

The military force amounted to seventy-six thousand men, of which, about twenty-six thousand were foreigners.*

The accession of Frederic to the throne occasioned an entire change in his apparent character. He had hitherto only been remarkable for his attachment to literature, to philosophy, to science, to music, and to the society of men of talents; but the new situation in which he was placed immediately called forth the dormant ambition of his nature — the warlike talents, which had hitherto probably been unknown, even to their possessor, and that ceaseless and laborious activity in the details of the art of reigning, which continued to actuate him till the last day of his existence. Still the love of literature, and, above all, of poetry, or, as Voltaire would have called it, "the mania of making verses," continued to form one of the principal features of his mind; but these amusements were confined to particular times and hours, when all other business had been previously completed.

Aware of the extensive and various nature of his duties as king, and fully determined never to delegate to others the labours, which he considered to belong to his own station, Frederic, at the commencement of his reign, made a re-

* Frederic II. Histoire de mon Temps.

gular distribution of his time, to which he adhered with the most rigid exactness; and in which he made very few alterations, during the forty-six years that he swayed the Prussian sceptre. His first care was to ensure his early rising, for he knew full well, that, without that habit, much business could not be got through in the course of the day. He therefore ordered his servants to wake him at four o'clock, at which hour he intended to leave his bed. They did so; but Frederic was naturally inclined to sleep, and, therefore, he always begged for a little more time, which it may be easily supposed he obtained without difficulty; and thus, instead of four, he usually rose at six. In vain he scolded and commanded, for the next morning always found him entreating for more sleep; and where were the attendants that could resist the requests of a despotic monarch? Finally, determining to vanquish himself and his nature, he commanded the person who called him, under pain of being made a common soldier for life, every morning to put upon his face a towel dipped in cold water. By this violent measure he conquered his natural somnolency, and continued to rise at four o'clock till an advanced period of his life.* His dress, which was always the same, the uniform of his guards, with mili-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

tary boots, was put on in a very few minutes; indeed, the whole business of his toilette was completed in less than a quarter of an hour. A single valet-de-chambre lit his fire, shaved him, and curled his hair. He was not possessed of either slippers or bedgown; only, Thiebault says, when he was very ill, he occasionally, but very rarely, put on a sort of linen wrapper; but even then he wore his boots. He hardly ever wore coats of other colours: and he appeared in silk stockings, as has been before mentioned, only on one day in the year; namely, when he went to the court of his wife upon her birth-day.

As soon as he was dressed, one of his pages brought him the packet of letters, which had arrived for him by the post, or in any other way, and which had been delivered to the page by the secretaries of the cabinet. The king occupied himself in reading these letters, which were often very numerous, till eight o'clock. He was, above all, peculiarly exact in observing whether the seals appeared to be broken or not; fearing, and with reason, that sometimes the secretaries might be tempted to read and suppress letters, of which the contents were displeasing to them. From a long habit of looking at the seals of letters, he had become well ac-

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

quainted with many, and knew to whom they belonged; in consequence of which knowledge, he frequently threw letters into the fire, or tore them to pieces, without reading them. Among other precautions contrived by Frederic to prevent the suppression of letters addressed to him, was the following: — Each master of the post, was obliged, with any letters he forwarded to the king, to send a list of them, as well as of the address of each person who wrote them; those who wrote to the king being commanded to leave at the post office, to which they confided their letters, the place of their residence. In spite of this, and other precautions, letters, according to Thiebault, were sometimes suppressed by the secretaries, who managed to alter the lists sent by the postmasters.

The different letters which the king opened, he distributed into three parcels: in the first were those whose requests were favourably received, and these were marked by the sheet of paper being doubled inwards; in the second, whose petitions were refused, the sheet was doubled outwards; and the third, respecting which he doubted, and therefore wished to delay answering, had the sheet doubled partly inwards and partly outwards. About eight o'clock, the letters being all sorted, one of the four secretaries of the cabinet entered, and received the

three parcels from the king. He then, while the king was at breakfast, read to him the request contained in each, reducing it to as few words as possible. The king dictated the answer equally shortly, except in cases where peculiar detail was necessary. Above all, when the answer to be made was to a woman, he never failed to add, "It is a woman; you must write civilly to her." The secretary made a particular mark on the top of each letter, according to the answer which was to be returned. This mark was a sort of cypher understood by the other secretaries, and by them alone. Of course this distribution of letters did not include the private correspondence of Frederic with his friends, or with the men of talents and celebrity, with several of whom at different periods of his life he corresponded: these letters were always answered with his own hand.

When the secretary came out of the king's apartment, he divided the letters with his three brethren, and they all immediately proceeded to write the answers, for which they had barely time enough, as it was necessary that they should be all brought to the king for signature, at the latest at four o'clock. All the labour of making the answers, as well as of copying them, was done by their own hands, as they were not allowed to have the assistance of any

other persons. At the time of the signature, the king always read a few of the letters, which he took, as chance directed his hand, out of the packets; and if, in this examination, any letter had been found wrongly answered, the secretary who had done it, would have been immediately dismissed. After the signature, the secretaries had to fold, to seal, to put in covers, and to direct the letters: the latter office was ordered to be performed by the secretaries themselves; in the former ones they were allowed to be assisted by their servants. At five o'clock all the letters were delivered to the courier, who carried them to Berlin. As soon as he arrived at the latter place, those answers which were addressed to individuals in the town, were forthwith delivered to them, and the others were put into the post. Therefore those persons, who did not immediately receive answers to the letters they had written to the king, were almost sure not to have any at all; unless the nature of their request had required it to be communicated to some minister, and thereby occasioned delay.

Frederic obliged his secretaries to live in the greatest solitude, and to communicate as little as possible with any one; and he hardly ever took one into his service who was married. These precautions were taken in order to prevent their being tempted to commit infidelities,

with regard to his correspondence. Their life was one of great labour and constant slavery; and they never dined, but were supported during the day by soups: the supper was their principal meal. To make up for these privations, their salaries were large; and they had each a good house, granted to them by the king. To give some notion of the strictness, with which Frederic expected his secretaries to conform to the rules and way of life he had prescribed for them, it may be as well to quote his speech to the Counsellor Müller, upon offering him one of the places of secretary to the cabinet. Müller was one of the few instances, of a married man permitted to hold the situation. "I propose to you," said the king to him, "to immolate yourself to the service of the state. Consider well whether you have the courage to do so. I had resolved never to employ a married man in my cabinet, and I know that you have a wife and children; it is therefore an exception to a very important rule, that I determine myself to make in your favour. I do it in consequence of the particular esteem I have for you, and of the firm hope I entertain, that your wife and your children will never approach the room where you write, that they will know nothing, and will not meddle with any affairs. In a word, you will never forget that, for the good of my service,

you must neither have family, nor relations, nor friends!"*

With regard to the manner in which he was addressed, and as to whether sufficient respect was shown, either in the way of writing or in the terms employed, Frederic was perfectly indifferent; but there was one point upon which he was generally known to be very particular, and that was, that the letter should not occupy more than the first side of the sheet of paper. Letters which turned the page, were sure to excite his anger, to be ill-received, and drily answered.

At nine o'clock, when Frederic had sent away his secretaries, he gave audience to his first aide-de-camp, who was for the most part a general officer. With him he arranged every thing relating to military affairs, in all their branches; and he then dismissed him loaded with business, which was to be completed by the next day. At ten o'clock he frequently exercised either his own regiment of guards, or some other regiment of the garrison of Potsdam. After this, he attended the parade, which occupied him till dinner-time. Sometimes, though, he devoted this part of the day to his literary pursuits, to music, or to his private correspondence; and, as he advanced in age, this habit became more

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

frequent. During this period of the day he composed almost all his works, as well in prose as in verse; and in the course of these occupations he was frequently seen walking in his gardens, with a book under his arm, accompanied by three or four Italian greyhounds, and followed by a single page or footman. It was also at these hours that he gave his audiences; and placed all the accidental occupations, which had no other times allotted to them.

At twelve precisely, he dined with those guests whom he had invited; whose invitations were always sent to them at ten o'clock the same morning. These guests consisted ordinarily of literary men, of his relations the princes of the house of Brunswick, of a certain number of his courtiers, and of the general officers at that time at Potsdam. If he did not intend walking after dinner, he usually prolonged that repast till near three o'clock. As he was at all times of his life peculiarly fond of good living, his dinners were excellent, except that he insisted upon each dish being very highly seasoned with pepper and spices. He had twelve cooks of different nations, who were each expected to dress the particular dishes, which belonged to their respective countries. His desserts were also admirably served, as he eat much fruit, and considered it to be essential to his health. He preferred French wines, and

above all champaigne. At dinner he unbent himself from the labours of the day, and was almost invariably gay and willing to converse.

During the fine season Frederic was accustomed to take long walks after dinner. His most common walk was from the palace of Sans Souci, where he passed that part of the year, through his gardens, to what is called the New Palace; a considerable distance, which he generally walked with so quick a pace, as to render it difficult and even painful to the persons who accompanied him, to keep up with him. At four o'clock, the secretaries of the cabinet brought him his answers to the letters of the morning to sign; after which he generally received the person, who held the situation of secretary of his commandments. With him he transacted all the affairs and correspondence relative to the Academy, to the professors of the different schools, to men of learning, and artists. If nothing was required to be done upon these subjects, this period of the day was then devoted either to reading or literary compositions. At six o'clock his concert commenced, in which he himself played upon the flute. Of this instrument he was passionately fond, and was a great master in the art of playing upon it. He continued the use of the flute till an advanced period of his life, when, his teeth being all gone, he was no longer able to produce the sounds he wished.

After the concert, which lasted an hour, he occupied himself in conversation till supper, which took place at ten o'clock. At eleven o'clock at the latest the king was in bed. After the seven years' war, Frederic ceased to sup, and then his evenings concluded with a conversation with the persons, whom he had summoned to attend him. Such was, with very few exceptions, the disposition and occupation of Frederic's days, during the course of his long life.

One of the earliest cares of Frederic, as sovereign, was to augment his military forces. This he was enabled to do, by means of the treasures of the late king. Fifteen new battalions were raised, and were soon in a state to act, if necessary. He also made various ameliorations in the administration of his different provinces, and applied himself most diligently to every thing, by which he thought the condition of his subjects could be benefited. During the two months, which were occupied by these duties, he also made journeys of inspection through his territories. In one of these, in Westphalia, the idea struck him of going incognito to Paris, a capital he desired much to visit. With this view he assumed the name of the Count Du Four, and said he was from Bohemia. His brother, Prince William, was of the party, and called himself the Count Schafgotch; and Algarotti accompanied them. The expedition was suc-

cessful till they arrived at Strasburg; where the governor, the Marshal de Broglio, discovering the rank of the travellers, Frederic was disgusted from prosecuting his journey farther in the direction of Paris. Of this tour Frederic gave an account in a letter, half prose and half verse, to Voltaire; but he does not mention in it, that he had ever intended going beyond Strasburg.

From Strasburg he now determined to go either to Brussels or Antwerp, for the purpose of seeing Voltaire; but a fever, which attacked him at the small castle of Meuse, between Cleves and Wesel, put a stop to his travels, and obliged him to send to Voltaire, and entreat him to come to him. This was the first meeting of these two celebrated men, though they had now been for some years engaged in an intimate and frequent correspondence. "I went," says Voltaire, "to present to the king my most respectful homage. I found at the gate of the court-yard a single soldier on guard. The privy counsellor Rambonet, minister of state, was walking about the court, and blowing on his fingers to warm them: he had on great ruffles of dirty linen, a hat with holes in it, and an old lawyer's wig, of which one end went into one of his pockets, while the other hardly covered his shoulder. I was told that this man was charged with an important affair of state, which

was true. I was conducted to his majesty's apartment, where there was nothing but the bare walls. I perceived in a closet, lit by a single wax candle, a small bed, two feet and a half wide; on which was laid a little man, wrapped up in a cloak of coarse blue cloth: it was the king, who perspired and shivered under a miserable coverlet, in a violent access of fever. I made my bow, and began the acquaintance by feeling his pulse, as if I had been his first physician. When the fit was passed, he dressed himself, and came to supper. Algarotti, Keyserling, Maupertuis *, and the king's ambassa-

* In one of Frederic's letters to Jordan, dated Wesel, 2d September 1740, he says: — "Maupertuis is arrived: he is a good-looking man, and agreeable in society; however, very far inferior to Algarotti. I am getting up a little quarrel with *Monsieur de Liege*, and I am anxious to see what turn the affair will take, before I leave this place. I have not yet settled how and where I shall see Voltaire." In another letter, of the 24th of September, he says: — "I have at length seen Voltaire, whom I was so anxious to become acquainted with; but, alas! I saw him, when I was under the influence of my fever, and when my mind and my body were equally languid. Now, with persons like him, one must not be ill; on the contrary, one must be very well, and even, if possible, in better health than usual. He has the eloquence of Cicero, the mildness of Pliny, and the wisdom of Agrippa: he unites, in a word, all that is desirable of the virtues and talents of three of the greatest men of antiquity. His intellect is always at work; and every drop of ink that falls from his pen, is transformed at once into wit. He declaimed to us Mahomet, an admirable tragedy he has composed, which transported us with delight: for myself, I could only admire in silence."

dor to the States General, made up the party; and we talked learnedly respecting the immortality of the soul, liberty, and the Androgynes of Plato. The counsellor Rambonet was, during this time, mounted upon a post-horse; he rode all the night, and arrived the next day at the gates of Liege; where he served a notice in the name of the king his master; while two thousand of the troops of Wesel laid the town of Liege under contribution. This expedition had for pretext some rights, which the king pretended to over one of the suburbs. He even charged me to draw up a manifesto, and I made one, as well as I was able; never doubting that a king, with whom I supped, and who called me his friend, must be in the right. The affair was soon settled, upon payment to the king of a million of ducats." * The cause of quarrel between the King of Prussia and the Bishop of Liege, was not the one stated by Voltaire. Some subjects of the lordship of Herstal, which belonged to Prussia, had revolted, and the Bishop of Liege protected them in their revolt. This occurred towards the end of the reign of Frederic William, who sent the Colonel Creutz to Liege, on a diplomatic mission, to accommodate the affair, but the bishop refused to receive him. †

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire; ecrits par lui-même.

† Histoire de mon Temps, par Frederic II.

Frederic William, just before his death, had been employed in a negotiation, respecting the disputed succession of the duchies of Berg and Juliers. The Prussian sovereigns had been in possession, ever since the year 1666, of one half of the territories of the antient dukes of Cleves, Berg, and Juliers. Their portion consisted of the duchy of Cleves, the county of La Marck, and that of Ravensberg. The other half, consisting of the duchies of Berg and Juliers, and the lordships of Winnandal and Breskerland, had at the same time devolved upon the Dukes of Neuburg. This division took place upon the death of John William duke of Cleves, surnamed the Simple; and the Marquis of Brandenburgh and the Duke of Neuburg at the same time made a treaty of alliance, by which they confirmed the eventual succession of the whole territory to each other, upon the failure of heirs male in either family. In 1732 Charles Philip of Neuburg, Elector Palatine, having no children, caused the states of Berg and Juliers to take the oath of allegiance to his collateral relation, Charles Theodore prince of Sulzbach, the heir of the palatinate. Against this measure, the King of Prussia entered his protest, upon the ground of the treaty of succession subsisting between himself and the House of Neuburg.*

* L'Art de verifier les Dates.

Meanwhile the Emperor Charles the Sixth had made a promise of the succession, upon the ground of its being a fief of the empire, to Augustus the Second, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony *; which did not, however, prevent him from making a similar promise to the Prince of Sulzbach. He had also promised, through the Count Seckendorff, the imperial minister at Berlin, to assist the King of Prussia in his claims upon these territories. Seckendorff was afterwards imprisoned by the emperor at Gratz, and, according to Frederic, only obtained his liberty, upon condition of delivering up to his master all the orders and dispatches, by which he had been authorized to give to the King of Prussia the most solemn assurances of the emperor's assistance, with regard to the succession of Berg and Juliers.† This question was finally settled in the year 1742, when the King of Prussia agreed to allow the Prince of Sulzbach to take possession of the duchies of Berg and Juliers, upon condition of his giving up to him, the King of Prussia, certain portions of the former duchy. This long dispute is mentioned here, as having been one of the grounds of complaint of the sovereign of Prussia against the house of Austria, and as one of the causes

* Histoire de mon Temps, par Frederic II.

† Ibid.

which induced Frederic eventually to declare war against Maria Theresa.

In the month of October 1740, died the Emperor Charles the Sixth, as it is said, of indigestion, caused by eating to excess of a dish of mushrooms; "which dish of mushrooms," as Voltaire observes, "changed the destinies of Europe." Frederic immediately determined upon attacking the house of Austria, and endeavouring to obtain possession of Silesia, to which province his family had claims. These rested upon the following grounds. The principality of Jægerndorf, a district of Silesia, had been bought, in 1524, by George margrave of Brandenburgh, of the house of Schellenberg, with the consent of Lewis king of Bohemia and of Hungary, under whom this province was a fief. The margrave left the principality to his son George Frederic, who ceded it, by agreement, to Joachim Frederic elector of Brandenburgh. Joachim gave it to his second son, John George, who, having incurred the ban of the empire in the reign of Ferdinand the Second, lost it in 1623; when the emperor gave the investiture of it to the Princes of Lichtenstein, in spite of the remonstrances of the whole house of Brandenburgh. It is true, that in 1686, the Elector of Brandenburgh, Frederic William, renounced his pretensions to Jægerndorf, upon the cession to him, by the house of Austria, of

the circle of Schwibus; which circle his son Frederic, the first King of Prussia, was persuaded to restore in 1695 to the house of Austria, upon receiving the sum of two hundred and fifty thousand florins. But many reasons, and apparently good ones, were urged on the side of Prussia, to prove the invalidity of these two latter arrangements. Frederic had also claims upon the Silesian principalities of Brieg, Lignitz, and Wohlau, founded upon a treaty of succession made, in 1537, between Joachim the Second, elector of Brandenburgh, and Frederic duke of Brieg and Lignitz. The latter prince was fully authorized by the privileges granted to him, and to his ancestors, by the house of Austria, to enter into this agreement; though the Emperor Ferdinand the First took upon himself, in the year 1546, to declare the act of succession in question null and void. The sovereigns of Prussia had always considered this act of the emperor, and his consequent usurpation of the provinces in dispute, illegal; though none of them, till the time of Frederic the Second, had had the force or the courage to offer resistance to it.*

The news of the death of the emperor reached the King of Prussia at Rheinsberg, where he was attacked by a fever, which, however, did not

* Busching.

prevent his displaying his usual activity in making preparations for his intended campaign against Silesia; "a project which," as he observes himself, "promised to fulfil all the political views he had most at heart, as it was the readiest means of obtaining reputation, of augmenting the power of his kingdom, and of terminating satisfactorily the long litigated question of the succession of the duchy of Berg." * He did not, however, confide his secret to any one. It was evident to all, that some great expedition was intended; but it was generally thought Frederic would declare himself against France, in favour of Maria Theresa, and of her husband the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was a candidate for the imperial crown. Even the wily Voltaire, who was at present with the King of Prussia, and who appears to have filled at this time the discreditable office of spy of the French government, under the guise of private friendship to Frederic, was deceived; and cannot in his Memoirs conceal his indignation at having been thus a dupe. At length, on the 15th of December 1740, at the end of a great masked ball at Berlin, the king, still suffering under the effects of his fever, set out for the conquest of Silesia, at the head of thirty thousand brave and well-disciplined troops. As he mounted his horse, he said to the French ambassador, the

* Histoire de mon Temps.

Marquis de Beauveau, "I am going to play your game; if the aces are dealt to me, we will go halves." *

He had not, however, kept his designs so secret but that some suspicions of them had penetrated even to the court of Vienna. In consequence of this, the Marquis Botta was sent to Berlin, nominally to compliment Frederic upon his accession, but really to dive into his intentions. Botta, who was a man of ability, almost upon his arrival, conceived suspicions of the king's plans of conquest. In consequence, at his first audience, he talked of nothing but the inconveniences of the route he had come through Silesia, and of the badness of the roads of that country, which recent inundations had rendered almost impassable. The king upon this turned on his heel, with the remark, that all that could happen to those, who were obliged to travel them would be, to be well-covered with mud, when they got to the end of their journey. † A short time before Frederic set off on his Silesian expedition, he sent the Count de Gotter to Vienna, to demand from Maria Theresa and her husband the acknowledgment of the claims of his master upon Silesia; and, if they consented to this, he was to promise them,

* "Je vais jouer votre jeu; si les as me viennent, nous partagerons."

† Histoire de mon Temps.

on his part, his voice in the imperial election, as well as his assistance against all their enemies. In case these terms were not listened to, the count had power to declare war against the court of Vienna. The army, however, of Frederic was more expeditious than his ambassador, as it entered Silesia two days before the latter arrived at Vienna.

On the 23d of December the army crossed the frontier, disseminating in its passage placards, deducing the claims of the house of Brandenburgh to the province; as well as a manifesto, declaring, that the King of Prussia took possession of it upon the present occasion, to guarantee it from the invasion of other powers. These measures had the effect of calming the minds of the people. In addition to which it must be remembered, that two thirds of the population of the province being protestants, and having suffered long under the intolerable bigotry of their Austrian rulers, were favourable to Frederic on account of his religion.

The King of Prussia entered Silesia, following the course of the Oder, which brought him to the fortress of Glogau. In consequence of the rigour of the season, (it was now mid-winter,) he determined not to besiege, but to blockade it. For this purpose he left before the place a portion of his troops, under the command of Prince Leopold of Anhalt, and pushed on with

the rest towards Breslau, which was menaced by the Austrians under the command of General Brown.

Breslau, the capital of Silesia, at this time enjoyed privileges similar to those of the free imperial towns; being governed by its own magistrates, and exempted from the necessity of receiving a garrison. The determination of the inhabitants to adhere to the latter custom, occasioned their refusal to receive the troops of Brown; who, however, would probably have eventually succeeded in forcing them to admit him, had it not been for the rapid advance of the King of Prussia. After leaving Glogau, the king had pushed forward so rapidly, that, after four days' march, he found himself at the gates of Breslau; while a separate detachment of his army, under the command of Marshal Schwerin, had taken another route by Leignitz, Schweidnitz, and Frankenstein, for the purpose of clearing that part of Silesia of the Austrians.

On the 1st of January 1741, Frederic took possession of the suburbs of Breslau, without resistance, and sent the Colonels Borck and Goltz to summon the town to surrender.* At the same time he detached a portion of his troops to the other side of the Oder, thus blockading the town on both sides. Breslau was, at

* Histoire de mon Temps.

this time, ill-provisioned; the ditches of the fortifications were frozen over; and a considerable portion of the inhabitants, being protestants, were favourable to the King of Prussia. An enthusiastic protestant shoemaker harangued the people in favour of the Prussians, and excited them so much, that the magistrates deemed it prudent no longer to delay entering into composition with the invaders. The consequence of this determination was, that they signed an act of neutrality with the King of Prussia, and opened their gates to him and his army. As soon as Frederic had obtained possession of the town, he dismissed from their appointments all the functionaries, who had been placed there by the Queen of Hungary; deeming it prudent to adopt this measure at once, in order to prevent intrigues against the Prussian interests. The time Frederic remained at Breslau was occupied by him, in addition to the arrangements of his military plans, in endeavouring to gain the affections of the people, in which he, to a very great degree, succeeded. He preserved to the catholics all their privileges; paid great deference to the Bishop of Breslau and his clergy, encouraging, at the same time, the protestants; and was generally attentive both to the nobility and the burghers. Each evening was marked by a ball or fête given by him to the inhabitants, at which he generally opened the festivity with some one,

either of the most beautiful, or of the most noble ladies of the province.*

From Breslau the king marched to Namslau and Ohlau, two small towns, which forthwith submitted to him. While the King of Prussia was taking possession of the fortresses on the Oder, Marshal Schwerin had advanced by Frankenstein to Ottmachau on the Neisse, the river which separates Upper from Lower Silesia. At the gates of this fortress the King of Prussia joined his general, and their united forces soon reduced the garrison to surrender. They then proceeded to the town of Neisse, which they bombarded, but without effect; the governor, named Roth, having fortified the town in a manner, which rendered it impregnable during the severe season of winter. After this attempt the Prussians retired into winter quarters, leaving, however, the towns of Glogau, Brieg, and Neisse in a state of blockade. Meanwhile the Austrian army, under the command of General Brown, had been obliged by Marshal Schwerin to retire into Moravia.

The King of Prussia, after placing his troops in winter quarters, returned to Berlin, for the purpose of superintending the new levies of troops he was making, and also to regulate the internal concerns of his kingdom. He, however,

* Vie de Frederic II.

left Marshal Schwerin at the theatre of war, and ordered him to continue the conquest of the province, as well as he was able, without harassing or wearing out the troops. That general, in consequence, rendered himself master of Troppau, Jægerndorf, Oderberg, and some other fortresses. *

The Count de Gotter, Frederic's envoy at the court of Vienna, was, during all this time, negotiating, in the hope that the successes of his master, would lower the inflexible haughtiness of the imperial cabinet. The contrary, however, was the case. The daughter of so many emperors, and her counsellors, were only rendered the more intractable by the successful audacity of a prince, who was considered as a vassal; and whose duty, to use the language of the imperial court, was, as arch-chamberlain of the empire, to present to the emperor the bason to wash his hands, instead of prescribing laws to his daughter. These insolent remarks at length roused the anger of the minister of the victorious sovereign; and, upon one occasion, he showed the Grand Duke of Tuscany a letter from Frederic, in which the latter said, "If the grand duke chooses to ruin himself, let him ruin himself." Negotiations, where the contracting

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

parties were so bitter against one another, could never lead to any satisfactory results, nor did they in fact do so.

The King of Prussia was more successful in his negotiations with Russia, than in those at Vienna. At the same time that he had sent the Count de Gotter to the latter court, he dispatched the Baron de Winterfeld to Petersburgh. Winterfeld was son-in-law to Marshal Munich, who at this time was all powerful in that country. The Empress Anne, at her death, had left the empire to her niece the Princess Anne of Mecklenburgh Schwerin, married to Anthony Ulric prince of Brunswick Bevern, and to her son, who thus became emperor by the name of Ivan the Sixth. She had, however, placed them under the regency of her favourite Biren. The power of Biren had since been overthrown, and he himself banished to Siberia. The moment seemed favourable for the King of Prussia; nor were his expectations deceived. Winterfeld made use of the credit of his relation Munich with adroitness, and finally concluded a defensive alliance between his master and the Russian government.

The negotiations of the Prussian court with France were, upon the whole, successful. Frederic commenced a correspondence with Cardinal Fleury, then prime minister of the latter country. This proceeding appears to have

pleased the old man, who answered the letters of Frederic with an amicable frankness. The King of Poland (Augustus the Third, Elector of Saxony) was the sovereign, who was the most hostile to Frederic, from the united circumstances of being his nearest neighbour, and from the consequent hope of sharing in his spoils, if he was unfortunate in the war he had undertaken. His ambassadors were everywhere employed in obstructing the negotiations of those of Frederic. To these intrigues the King of England was a party; for George the Second, although connected by blood as well as interest with Frederic, appears to have been always, throughout his life, either his secret or avowed enemy; and upon the present occasion he had early shown a disposition to support the views of the court of Vienna. The King of Prussia was therefore obliged to leave a body of troops, consisting of thirty thousand men, on the Hanoverian frontier of his dominions, in order to watch the proceedings of his uncle. He at the same time reinforced his Silesian army till it was raised to an effective force of sixty thousand men. These duties concluded, he left Berlin on the 19th of February, and proceeded to rejoin his troops.

The first event of the campaign was the taking of Glogau by the Prince Leopold of Anhalt, by assault, on the 9th of March, after it had been blockaded for ten weeks. In this fortress the

Count Wallis, and a garrison consisting of eight hundred men, were taken prisoners. Upon this occasion the admirable discipline of the Prussian troops appeared in all its lustre: not a single house was pillaged, nor were any of the inhabitants injured or insulted.*

The Austrian field-marshal, Count Neuperg, had, during the winter, assembled a considerable army in Moravia, and now entered Upper Silesia, with the view of cutting off the portion of the Prussian army stationed, under the command of Marshal Schwerin, in that part of the province; of delivering Brieg, which was blockaded; of seizing upon the Prussian magazines at Ohlau; and then marching straight to Breslau. But Frederic was too much upon the alert to permit this, at least without a struggle. He therefore left Schweidnitz, where he was then stationed, and hastened to Neustadt, where he found his army assembled on the 5th of April. On the 8th, he passed the Neisse near Michelau, at the head of his troops, in order to intercept Neuperg. The latter arrived at Neisse on the 5th; on the 8th, took prisoners the Prussian garrison of Grotkau, consisting of nine hundred men; and, on the 9th, established himself at Mollwitz near Brieg.

On the evening of the 8th of April, Frederic, foreseeing the impending engagement, wrote

* Histoire de mon Temps.

the following feeling letter to his friend Jordan, at Berlin: — "My dear Jordan, we shall have a battle to-morrow. You know the chances of war, and that the lives of kings are not more respected by them, than those of private individuals. I know not what will be my lot. If my course is finished, do not forget the memory of a friend who always loved you tenderly. If, on the contrary, Heaven prolongs my days, I will write to you to-morrow, and send you word of our victory. Adieu, my dear friend, I am yours till death." *

The King of Prussia having united his army on the evening of the 9th of April, found that it consisted of thirty battalions, sixty pieces of cannon, thirty squadrons of cavalry, and five of hussars. With this force he marched, at break of day, into the plains of Mollwitz, for the purpose of offering battle to Neuperg. †

The battle commenced by the Prussians taking prisoners a regiment of guards of Marshal Neuperg's. The army of the latter upon this dislodged rapidly from its quarters, and formed in order of battle between Mollwitz and Groningen. The Prussian army was drawn out between Hermsdorf and Pampitz. After a vigorous can-

* Correspondance de Frederic II.

† Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand. — Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand. — Histoire de mon Temps.

nonade on both sides, the Austrian hussars succeeded in turning the left of the King of Prussia's army, and pillaged his baggage at Pampitz. The Austrian general of cavalry, the Baron de Romer, who commanded the left wing of the imperial army, annoyed by the fire of the Prussians, attacked their right wing without orders. He succeeded in putting their cavalry into disorder, and then penetrated between the two lines of infantry. It was at this moment of the battle, that Frederic conceived it to be lost; and, carried along by his own flying cavalry, he fled to Oppeln. It is even said that he took refuge in a windmill, which led to the bitter remark, that the King of Prussia, at the battle of Mollwitz, "had covered himself with glory and flour." * Another story is current with regard to his flight. That he was pursued by an Austrian hussar, who had very nearly overtaken him. On a sudden the king stopped, faced about, and said to him, "Hussar, if you will leave me now, I will remember it." The hussar, who recognized the king, turned away, saying, "Be it so; we will meet again after the war is over." † The man, whose name was Paul Werner, became afterwards a lieutenant-general in the service of Prussia, colonel of a regiment of hussars, and knight of the Black Eagle.

* "Il s'est couvert de gloire et de farine."

† Vie de Frederic II.

Meanwhile the well-directed fire, and imperturbable discipline of the Prussian infantry had succeeded in repelling the troops of Romer. They retreated with great loss, and their commander was killed. The General Berlichingen, who commanded the Austrian right wing, attacked the left wing of the Prussians, and obliged it to give way. But the Prussians soon rallied; and their infantry, under the guidance of Marshal Schwerin, repulsed the enemies, and continued to gain ground. The Austrians yielded, and endeavoured in vain to rally themselves behind a ravine. Thus the whole line of the Austrians was thrown into a state of disorder; and the army was obliged finally to retreat. The victorious army passed the night upon the field of battle. The loss of the Austrians amounted to near five thousand killed and wounded; and nine pieces of cannon and four standards were taken from them. The Prussians had four thousand six hundred killed and wounded; among the former was the Margrave Frederic of Brandenburgh Schwedt, the cousin of Frederic. Ten princes of the house of Brandenburgh are said to have been present at this engagement.*

Thus concluded the battle of Mollwitz, which was the first event that laid the foundations of the greatness of the Prussian power. This vic-

* Histoire de mon Temps. — Vie de Frederic II.

tory was the fruit of the admirable discipline and bravery, and the superior tactics, of the Prussian infantry, conducted as it was by the experienced talent of Marshal Schwerin, who had been formed in the school of Marlborough and Eugene, as well as in that of Charles the Twelfth, and had profited by all their lessons. The anxiety of Frederic as to the issue of the engagement must have been intense, for he wrote word, immediately after it had taken place, to the Prince of Anhalt; "I have neither eaten nor slept for two days." In the account he has left us of this war, he says very fairly, that the contest in this campaign between Neuperg and himself, seemed to be which should commit the most faults; and he adds, "Mollwitz was the school of the king and his troops. That prince reflected profoundly upon all the faults and errors he had fallen into, and tried to correct them for the future." *

Voltaire † tells a ridiculous story of the misfortunes, which happened to Maupertuis during

* Histoire de mon Temps.

† The King of Prussia wrote an account to Voltaire of his victory, which the latter received in the theatre at Lisle, during the first representation of his tragedy of Mahomet. He read the king's letter to the audience between the acts, which occasioned great applause. "You will see," said he, "that this piece of Mollwitz will ensure the success of mine." "Vous verrez que cette piéce de Mollwitz fera reussir la mienne." — Commentaire historique des Œuvres de l'Auteur de la Henriade.

the battle. He says that he followed the army, anticipating great advantages to himself by so doing, and hoping that the king would provide him with a horse. As this was not the case, he bought a jackass for two ducats; which, however, when he fled with the king, could not go fast enough to save him from the Austrian hussars, who took him prisoner and plundered him.* The fact was, that Maupertuis had followed the king to the battle on horseback, and had got up into a tree, tying his horse at the bottom of it, in order to see what was going on at a distance. In this position he was seen by a party of Austrian hussars, who immediately gallopped up to the place, and, before he could escape, seized upon him, and took from him whatever of value he had about his person. Luckily for him, he was recognized by the Prince of Lichtenstein, who had known him at Paris, and who now delivered him from the hands of his ruthless plunderers.

Neuperg retired to the right side of the river Neisse, and entrenched himself between the town of that name and Bilau, while waiting for reinforcements.†

* Mémoires de Voltaire.

† Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

CHAPTER II.

CONSEQUENCES OF THE BATTLE OF MOLLWITZ. — BRIEG TAKEN. — VIEWS OF THE ENGLISH AND FRENCH COURTS. — THE MARSHAL DE BELLEISLE AMBASSADOR AT THE DIET AT FRANKFORT: — HE CONCLUDES A TREATY WITH FREDERIC. — CONTINUATION OF THE CAMPAIGN. — TREATY OF PRUSSIA WITH BAVARIA. — THE BAVARO-FRENCH ARMY ADVANCES TOWARDS VIENNA. — PRAGUE TAKEN. — OLMUTZ CAPITULATES TO MARSHAL SCHWERIN. — ELECTOR OF BAVARIA ELECTED EMPEROR: — HIS SUBSEQUENT CAREER. — CAMPAIGN OF 1742. — BATTLE OF CZASLAU. — PEACE CONCLUDED. — THE FORTUNES OF MARIA THERESA REVIVE. — STATE OF THE DIFFERENT POWERS AT THIS PERIOD.

THE first enterprise of the Prussians, after the victory of Mollwitz, was the investiture of the town of Brieg. To the Marshal Kalkstein was entrusted the conduct of the siege; while the king, with a part of his army, remained near Mollwitz, in order to cover his operations. The trenches were opened on the 27th of April, and the town capitulated on the 4th of May. The King of Prussia, in consideration of the courageous defence made by the governor Piccolomini, granted him the honours of war; but the garrison were compelled to enter into an engagement,

not to serve against the Prussians for the space of two years.*

The victory of the Prussians at Mollwitz was received with dissatisfaction at the English court; but at that of France with much joy. It determined the government there to take a more active part in the contest; and, if possible, to make use of this opportunity, to give the finishing blow to the power of the house of Austria. With this view the Marshal de Belle-isle, ambassador from France to the diet of election, which was now holding at Frankfort for the purpose of choosing an emperor, was sent to the camp of Frederic. His orders were to conclude an alliance with that monarch, of which the principal articles were to be, the elevation of the Elector of Bavaria to the imperial dignity, the division and dismemberment of the provinces of the Queen of Hungary, and the guarantee, which France was willing to promise to the King of Prussia, of Lower Silesia, provided he would renounce his claims upon the duchies of Juliers and Berg, and give his vote at the diet of election to the Elector of Bavaria. The marshal had also power to stipulate, that France should send two armies into the empire; the one to the assistance of the Elector of Bavaria, and the other into West-

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

phalia, for the purpose of keeping in check the Hanoverians and Saxons.* This treaty, though not entirely concluded, was far advanced towards its completion, during the stay of the marshal in the Prussian camp. Frederic, as he informs us himself, did not sign it immediately, "because he did not wish to act precipitately in affairs of such great consequence; and was also willing to reserve this measure as a last resource." He also found that the marshal gave way too much to visionary schemes, in his wish to abase the house of Austria. "He seemed," says the king, "as if he thought that all the territories of the Queen of Hungary were already on sale to the highest bidder." One day, when he was with the king, he seemed more occupied and absent than usual. Frederic asked him if he had heard any bad news? "None," replied the marshal; "what now embarrasses me, sire, is, that I cannot settle what we shall do with Moravia." The king advised him to offer it to the King of Poland, and the marshal was most grateful for the suggestion.†

The effect of the battle of Mollwitz upon the King of England was this,—that, though it did not diminish his hostility towards his nephew, or prevent his intriguing against him in various courts, it led him to take the precaution of not

* Histoire de mon Temps. † Ibid.

committing acts of open hostility. He even offered his services as mediator between the courts of Berlin and Vienna, and with this view sent to the camp of Frederic Lord Hyndford*, as minister plenipotentiary from England, and the Sieur Schwickelt, in the same capacity from Hanover. According to the King of Prussia's account, these two negotiators, though coming from the same sovereign, had entirely different instructions, and regarded one another with greater distrust and dislike, than any other two of the foreign ministers in the camp. The Hanoverian was instructed to offer the neutrality of his master, upon the cession to his electorate of certain territories; while the Englishman volunteered the good offices of the King of England, to engage the Queen of Hungary to cede certain principalities in Lower Silesia. Meanwhile Finch†, the English minister in Russia, was doing his utmost to persuade that government to declare war against Prussia, to which determination it was but too much disposed. The successful negotiations of

* John (Carmichael) third Earl of Hyndford, who was employed during the reign of George the Second in various diplomatic missions.

† The Honourable Edward Finch Hatton, fifth son of Daniel second Earl of Nottingham, and sixth Earl of Winchilsea. He was at different times minister at the court of Sweden, at that of Russia, at that of Poland, at the diet of Ratisbon, and in Holland.

Winterfeld with Munich had been rendered useless, in consequence of the intrigues of the Count de Lynar, the ambassador of the King of Poland. This diplomate, having made an impression upon the heart of the grand duchess, used his influence with her to favour the views of his sovereign; who, as has been already seen, was in alliance with the Queen of Hungary. A Russian army was in consequence assembled in Livonia, which was destined to act against Prussia. The declaration of war by Sweden against Russia, however, in the first place, retarded their operations; and, subsequently, the revolution which took place in the government of the latter country, on the 6th of December in this year *, which placed Elizabeth, the second daughter of Peter the Great, upon the throne of the czars, again changed the politics and dispositions of the Russian cabinet.

In these critical circumstances it became necessary for Frederic to attach to himself permanently some powerful ally; and to this he was more particularly led, by the reports he heard of Danish and Hessian troops taken into the pay of the King of England, and designed to act, in conjunction with the Saxons, against him. He therefore at length signed the treaty with France, stipulating at the same time that it

* 1741.

should be kept secret, till its being known could do no injury to the Prussians, or rather till the French armies were ready to act in their favour. Frederic tells us himself, that the secret was kept most religiously, and that he succeeded in amusing Hyndford and Schwickelt with negotiations, as long as was necessary for his purpose.

During these various negotiations, Neuperg's army had been reinforced with troops from Hungary, and with considerable bodies of the militia of the Austrian states. The campaign for some time offered only the incidents of occasional skirmishes of detached parties, in which, however, the Prussians had ordinarily the advantage. The Prussian army was at first encamped near Grotkau, and afterwards occupied the heights of Strehlen; while that of Austria had placed itself, about three miles off, in an impregnable camp behind the town of Neisse. Meanwhile Neuperg had established communications with Breslau (of which the independent neutrality had thus far been respected), in the hope of obtaining possession of that important town. The intrigue was conducted through the means of some Austrian old ladies, resident there, and bitter enemies of the Prussian invasion; and some of the magistrates of the place were also cognizant of it.*

* Histoire de mon Temps.

The King of Prussia was too well served by his spies not to be made acquainted with what was going on; and he determined to anticipate the schemes of his enemies. With this view, he, upon some pretext, sent for those magistrates of Breslau, whom he knew to be the most attached to the house of Austria, to wait upon him in his camp. He also invited all the foreign ministers resident at Breslau to attend him, in order that their persons might not be exposed to any tumult, to which the seizing upon the town by surprise might give rise. This done, Marshal Schwerin marched towards the town with several battalions, which, advancing by different roads, re-united in the suburbs.* He demanded passage through the town for a single regiment. While this was entering at one gate, three battalions and five squadrons contrived to gain admission at another. The infantry immediately took possession of the ramparts, while the cavalry cleared the streets. In less than an hour the town was taken complete possession of, without pillage or violence of any kind. The burghers took the oath of allegiance to Frederic; and then Marshal Schwerin returned to the camp, leaving three battalions, under the command of General Marwitz, to garrison the town. The surprise of Neuperg, when he heard of this expedition, was equal to

* 10th August 1741.

his disappointment. He endeavoured to make up for it, by an attempt to get possession of the Prussian magazines at Schweidnitz; but in this he was foiled, as the king's advanced guard arrived there before him.

The King of Prussia was now determined upon attempting to make Neuperg retrace his steps, and retire into Moravia. He, therefore, advanced against him, and partly by menaces, and partly by negotiations, induced him to retreat.* This happened during the month of October. It appears that while Frederic was pressing Neuperg on every side, Lord Hyndford was negotiating between the Austrians and Prussians, and endeavouring to bring the former to reason. His remonstrances, and the present bad state of their affairs, had so much effect upon the court of Vienna, that they at length consented to cede to Prussia Lower Silesia, the town of Neisse, and a small portion of Upper Silesia. To these propositions was added an offer, that Neuperg should abandon Silesia, provided the king would declare, verbally, that he would not attempt any thing against the Queen of Hungary.† The temptation, as Frederic observes, was not to be resisted; the enemies being willing to content themselves with a verbal com-

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

munication, which would acquire provinces to the Prussian sceptre, and winter quarters for the army, fatigued as it was with eleven months of military labours. The king, therefore, consented to an interview with Neuperg, which took place at Oberschnellendorf: Frederic was accompanied only by the Colonel Goltz; with Neuperg were the General Lentulus and Lord Hyndford. It was here agreed, that the Prussian troops should be allowed to besiege and take the town of Neisse, and that they should not be disturbed in the winter quarters which they should be inclined to take possession of, either in Bohemia or Silesia. It was also arranged that this sort of truce should be kept secret; and that if it was divulged by either party, from that moment it should be null and void. Immediately after this convention, Neuperg and his army retired into Moravia; and the Prussians undertook the siege of Neisse, which capitulated on the twelfth day. The army then separated for the winter; and a portion marched into Bohemia, under the command of Prince Leopold of Anhalt Dessau. A few regiments were employed in the blockade of Neisse; and the rest of the troops, under Marshal Schwerin, were established in Upper Silesia. The king of Prussia received the homage of his new subjects at Breslau, and then returned to Berlin. "He began," as he remarks in his own

history of this war, "to learn the art of war, by means of the faults he himself committed."*

During this winter the Prussian capital was the centre of negotiations. France pressed the king to allow his army to act; England exhorted him to conclude a peace with Austria; Spain solicited his alliance; Denmark his advice how to change sides; Sweden requested his assistance; Russia his good offices at Stockholm; and the Germanic empire, anxious for peace, made the greatest possible endeavours to put an end to the present troubles.†

Shortly after the signature of his treaty with France, the King of Prussia concluded a similar one with the Elector of Bavaria. The result of the two was, that, in the course of the autumn of this year, two French armies made their appearance in the empire. One of them, under the command of the Marshal de Maillebois, took up a position in Westphalia, for the purpose of watching and controlling the movements of the Hanoverians; while the other, commanded by the Marshal de Broglio, united itself with the Bavarians commanded by Minutzi. The Bavaro-French troops entered Upper Austria, and advanced to Lintz, and from thence pushed onwards, till they were within two days' march of Vienna. The Austrian court fled in terror

* Histoire de mon Temps. † Ibid.

to Presburg; where the Queen of Hungary attended the diet, then sitting, and made a touching speech in Latin to that assembly; presenting to them at the same time her infant son, afterwards Joseph the Second. "Abandoned," said the weeping Maria Theresa, "by my friends, persecuted by my enemies, attacked by my nearest relations, I have no resource but in your fidelity, your courage, and your firmness: I place in your hands the daughter and the son of your kings, who look to you for their safety." The palatins were so moved to enthusiasm with these words, that they cried out with one accord; "Moriamur pro rege nostro, Mariâ Theresiâ! Let us die for *our king*, Maria Theresa!" * At this moment the Queen of Hungary's affairs were in so despairing a state, that, being with child, she wrote to her mother-in-law the Duchess of Lorraine; "I do not know whether a single town will remain to me, in which I may be brought to bed." A more favourable era, however, soon dawned upon her and her family.

Meanwhile the intrigues of the French emissaries, who thought the Elector of Bavaria would become too powerful if he obtained possession of the Austrian capital, induced that prince to abandon his project of marching to Vienna.

* Voltaire, Siecle de Louis XV.

While, therefore, a portion of the French troops, under the command of the Count de Segur, was left in Upper Austria, the remainder of the allied army turned towards Bohemia; where they were joined by a body of Saxons, under the command of Count Rutowsky. They took Prague by assault, on the night of the 25th of November, while the Grand Duke of Tuscany, the husband of Maria Theresa, was marching to its relief. In Prague, three thousand prisoners were taken. The Elector of Bavaria hastened there, upon hearing of the success of his arms, was crowned King of Bohemia during the month of December, and received the oath of fidelity from the constituted authorities. But while he was thus employed, the Austrian general, Khevenhuller, had driven the Count de Segur out of Austria, and had himself entered Bavaria; which obliged the Bavarian army to abandon Bohemia, and hasten to the defence of their own country.

In the last days of December 1741, the Marshal Schwerin, who (in spite of the tacit convention, already mentioned, which existed between Frederic and the Austrians,) had made an irruption into Moravia, attacked the town of Olmutz, which forthwith capitulated. The intention of the King of Prussia, when he left his army, was, that, by advancing thus far during the winter, they might be enabled in the course

of the ensuing campaign to carry the war to the gates of Vienna.

On the 24th of February 1742, the Elector of Bavaria was chosen Emperor of Germany, by the diet assembled at Frankfort; and this event seemed to be the signal for all the misfortunes, which, from this moment till the end of his life, marked the career of this unhappy sovereign. Almost at the moment of his election, his general, Marshal Tœrring, was defeated by the Austrian troops; and the hereditary states of Bavaria became the prey of the victors *; while the new emperor was obliged to take up his residence, first at Augsburg, and subsequently at Frankfort. † Bavaria continued to be occupied by the Austrians, with the exception of a very short interval in 1743, until the end of the year 1744. At that time, the emperor succeeded in returning to Munich, where he died on the 20th January 1745, worn out with

* Voltaire, Siecle de Louis XV. — L'Art de verifier les Dates.

† Voltaire's "Epiphanie de 1742" is well known.

"Stuart, chassé par les Anglois,
Dit son rosaire en Italie;
Stanislas, ex-roi Polonais,
Fume sa pipe en Austrasie;
L'Empereur, cheri des Français,
Vit a l'auberge en Franconie:
La belle reine des Hongrais,
Se rit de cette Epiphanie."

anxiety and chagrin. His career has been well and forcibly described by one of our own poets, as an exemplification of the vanity and unprofitablenes of all human ambition.

"The bold Bavarian, in a luckless hour,
Tries the dread summits of Cæsarean power;
With unexpected legions bursts away,
And sees defenceless realms receive his sway.
Short sway! fair Austria spreads her mournful charms;
The queen, the beauty, sets the world in arms;
From hill to hill the beacon's rousing blaze
Spreads wide the hope of plunder and of praise;
The fierce Croatian, and the wild hussar,
With all the sons of ravage, crowd the war.
The baffled prince, in honour's flatt'ring bloom
Of hasty greatness, finds the fatal doom —
His foes' derision, and his subjects' blame,
And steals to death from anguish and from shame." *

The King of Prussia left Berlin on the 18th of January, and went to Dresden, for the purpose of conferring with Augustus the Third, King of Poland and Elector of Saxony, who was become his ally; but who from timidity and incapacity, as well as from the treachery of some of his ministers, did not seem disposed to take an active part in the contest. Frederic describes pleasantly enough his interview with Augustus, in which he endeavoured to explain to him the objects of the campaign; and particularly dwelt upon the manner of obtaining possession of the province of Moravia, which, in the division of

* Johnson, Vanity of Human Wishes.

the spoil, was to be added to the Saxon territories. He says, "Augustus answered *yes* to every thing, with an air of being convinced, joined to a look of great *ennui*. Count Bruhl *, whom this interview displeased, interrupted it, by announcing to his master that the opera was about to commence. Ten kingdoms to conquer would not have kept the King of Poland a minute longer. He went therefore to the opera; and the King of Prussia obtained at once, and in spite of those who opposed it, a final decision." †

* Henry Count Bruhl, for a long series of years the first minister of the court of Dresden. He was a man of inferior abilities, great indolence, and unbounded profusion; to which qualities he united the lowest corruption, and the habit of betraying his master to whichever side in European politics offered him the most ample bribes. He was accustomed to say, that "public affairs carried themselves on, provided one did not trouble oneself about them." Sir Charles Hanbury Williams says, in his letters from Dresden, "Now, as every thing, of every kind, from the highest affairs of state down to operas and hunting, are all in Count Bruhl's immediate care, I leave you to judge how his post is executed. His expenses are immense: he keeps three hundred servants, and as many horses. His house is in extreme bad taste and extravagance. He has at least a dozen country seats, where he is always building and altering, but which he never sees. It is said, and I believe it, that he takes money for every thing the king disposes of in Poland, where they frequently have very great employments to bestow." Count Bruhl died in 1763, a few months after the weak sovereign, whom he had so long governed to his own ruin and that of his country.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

On leaving Dresden, Frederic went to Prague; and from thence to Glatz, which had just been given up to the Prussians by the Austrian commandant Fontenelle, who, however, still held possession of the citadel. From Glatz he proceeded to Olmutz, where he found a part of his own army, as well as of the French and Saxon troops. With these allies he concerted an expedition against the town of Iglau, situated on the borders of Moravia and Bohemia, which was in consequence taken possession of by the Saxon troops, under the command of Prince Thierry of Anhalt Dessau, on the 15th of February. After this exploit, the French army returned into Bohemia; the Saxons marched towards the frontiers of Hungary; and the Prussians advanced by Znaim towards Vienna. The Prince Thierry and his Saxons succeeded in routing a large body of irregular Austrian troops, which had been assembled in Hungary; while the advanced guard of Frederic was at the very gates of Vienna. His intention was to follow with all his forces, and to attack that capital; but the daily difficulties he experienced, in persuading the Saxon generals to act, joined to the absence of his French allies, obliged him to abandon this design, as well as the siege of Brunn, which, had been also undertaken. "The king's expedition," he observes of himself, "failed from many causes. Mon-

sieur de Segur * had allowed himself to be taken before succour could be sent to him. M. de Broglio * was paralytick. Bruhl's fears of Mademoiselle de Kling † were greater than his wishes respecting Moravia. Augustus the Third would have liked a kingdom, but he did not choose to take the trouble of conquering it." ‡

The Saxons had given different signs of defection, and at length, on the 25th of April, their army separated itself from that of Prussia, and took up its quarters near Leutmeritz. Frederic was therefore obliged to fall back upon the rest of his army, stationed in Bohemia, under the command of Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, who had advanced to meet him as far as Konigsgratz. On the 17th of April, the King of Prussia united the two portions of his army, and encamped himself near Chrudim. § The English government was still employing itself, outwardly at least, in the office of mediator between the contending parties; and with this view Lord Hyndford had gone to Vienna. But he found that court, whose hopes had been raised by the eva-

* The French generals.

† An Austrian emissary at the court of Dresden, who was employed to threaten Bruhl with the discovery of a piece of perfidy committed by him, unless he detached his master from the Prussian interests.

‡ Histoire de mon Temps.

§ Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

cuation of Moravia, and the defection of the Saxons, less tractable than it had been during the preceding year. This circumstance, having been communicated to the King of Prussia, determined him to bring the Austrians to a battle, without which he saw that peace was not to be expected or hoped for. Having first vainly endeavoured to persuade the palsied Marshal de Broglio to come to his assistance, he determined to give battle with his own forces alone; and, with this view, he made his army advance as far as the village of Chotusitz, where he found himself in presence of the Austrian army, under Prince Charles of Lorraine *, who had taken possession of the town of Czaslau. †

During the night of the 16th of May, the king, with part of his troops, marched to Kuttenberg; but hearing that the enemies were in

* Charles Alexander Prince of Lorraine, younger brother of Francis Duke of Lorraine and Tuscany and Emperor of Germany. He was a general of some ability, though unable to cope with the superior genius of Frederic. He was much beloved by his soldiers, and also by the people of the Netherlands, whom he governed for many years. He was born in 1712, and died in 1780. Frederic says of him, "He was brave, liked by his troops, was perfectly master of the business of the commissariat, had, perhaps, too great a facility in receiving the impressions which his favourites gave him, and, being fond of social intercourse, had the reputation of sometimes drinking to excess."

† Histoire de mon Temps.

movement, he returned forthwith to the camp at Chotusitz. With the dawn of day the Prince of Lorraine had drawn up his army in order of battle, before the Prussian entrenchments. The Prince of Anhalt established his heavy artillery on a height, and drew out his troops with the greatest promptitude. At this moment the king arrived, and arranged the troops he brought with him in a second line. Thus united, his army amounted to twenty-four thousand men; while that of the Austrians consisted of about thirty thousand. In the commencement of the battle, the Prussian cavalry succeeded in turning the left wing of the Austrians, and threw them into disorder. Upon seeing this, the King of Prussia brought up the infantry of his right wing, and completed the success of that part of his army. The cavalry of the left wing of the Prussians also commenced their part of the contest with the same good fortune; but the Austrians, having reinforced their right wing, rallied, and obliged the Prussians to retire as far as Chotusitz, where they pillaged their camp. The Austrian infantry advanced at the same time in that direction, and an obstinate combat commenced. The Prussian right wing, already victorious, decided the fate of the day, by attacking the enemy on the flank; while, at the same moment, the General Lehwald advanced from the village of Chotusitz, at the head of a

fresh body of infantry. The Austrians gave way, and taking the route by Czaslau, fled into Moravia. Thus ended the battle of Chotusitz or Czaslau, for it is called by both these names.* The Prussians had 3500 killed and wounded; the Austrians 5600, besides 1200 taken prisoners, eighteen cannons, and two standards.† Frederic is reported, upon this occasion, to have written to the King of France; — "Sire, the Prince Charles has attacked me, and I have beaten him!" To his friend Jordan he wrote the following characteristic epistle: —

"Dear Jordan,

"I must tell you, as gaily as I can, that we have beaten the enemies soundly, and that we are all pretty well after it. Poor Rottemburg is wounded in the breast and in the arm; but, as it is hoped, without danger. Adieu. You will be happy, I think, at the good news I send you. My compliments to Cæsarion."‡

"From the Field of Battle of Chotusitz,
17th May 1742."§

While Frederic was thus driving his enemies before him, the French troops, under the com-

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

† Müller, Tableau des Guérres de Frederic le Grand.

‡ Keyserling.

§ Correspondance de Frederic II.

mand of the Marshals de Broglio and de Belle-Isle, obtained a considerable advantage, near Sahé, over the division of the Austrian army, commanded by Prince Lobkowitz. This, however, was shortly after followed by some ill-success, which obliged them to retreat.*

The event of the battle of Chotusitz had a greater effect upon the Austrian cabinet, than all the previous representations of the mediator Lord Hyndford. They now showed sincerely a desire to bring the war to a conclusion; in proof of which, they sent Lord Hyndford to Breslau with full powers for that purpose. Frederic, who was dissatisfied with his French and Saxon allies, and was determined to treat without them, deputed the Count Podevils to meet him. The preliminaries of peace were signed by these two plenipotentiaries, at Breslau, on the 11th of June 1742. The principal article in them was, the cession made by the Queen of Hungary to the King of Prussia of Upper and Lower Silesia, and of the principality of Glatz; with the exception of the towns of Troppau and Jægerndorf, the principality of Teschen, and the chain of high mountains situated beyond the river Oppa. The definitive treaty was signed at Berlin on the 28th of July.

"Thus," observes Frederic, "Silesia was re-

* Histoire de mon Temps.

united to the dominions of Prussia. Two years of war sufficed for the conquest of this important province. The treasure, which the late king had left, was nearly exhausted; but it is a cheap purchase, when whole provinces are bought for seven or eight millions of crowns. The union of circumstances at the moment peculiarly favoured this enterprise. It was necessary for it, that France should allow itself to be drawn into the war; that Prussia should be attacked by Sweden; that, from timidity, the Hanoverians and Saxons should remain inactive; that the successes of the Prussians should be uninterrupted; and that the King of England, the enemy of Prussia, should become, in spite of himself, the instrument of its aggrandizement. What, however, contributed the most to this conquest was, an army which had been formed for twenty-two years by means of a discipline, admirable in itself, and superior to that of the troops of the rest of Europe; generals who were also true patriots; wise and incorruptible ministers; and, finally, a certain good fortune, which often accompanies youth, and deserts a more advanced age." *

Saxony acceded to the treaty of Breslau on the 2d of September; and on the 18th of November, George the Second, King of England, concluded with Frederic the treaty of offensive

* Histoire de mon Temps.

and defensive alliance called the treaty of Westminster, by which they mutually guaranteed to each other their respective possessions in Europe. France, meanwhile, complained that she had been deserted and abandoned by Prussia. To this Frederic replied, "That he had put himself into a course of remedies; and that he advised all others who were sick to do the same." *

It is difficult, on occasions like the one at present under consideration, to discover which party is the betrayer or the betrayed; as in these cases, it is almost invariably only a race of perfidy between them. If we may credit, however, accounts which were published at the time, the original sin of desertion rests with the French government. They intended to treat separately with the court of Vienna, but their plans were discovered by the King of Prussia, who managed, through the mediation of England, to forestal them. † The anecdote is thus related: — after the battle of Chotusitz, Frederic went to see the Austrian general Pallant, who had been wounded and taken prisoner. In the course of conversation the general remarked, that he should die contented if he could reconcile the King of Prussia with the Queen of

* "Qu'il s'étoit mis dans les remedes, et qu'il conseilloit aux autres malades de se retablir."

† Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

Hungary; and he assured him, at the same time, that if he continued the war, he would indubitably be the dupe of France. Frederic affected incredulity, and asserted that he had in his possession the proofs of the contrary. The General Pallant immediately answered, that what he advanced was true; and that he only asked for six days' delay, in order to convince the king of this. The general immediately dispatched a courier to Vienna, who returned after some days; and he lost no time in apprizing the king of his arrival. Frederic, upon this, paid another visit to Pallant, who delivered him a letter, which he entreated him to read with attention. Frederic cast his eyes over it, and saw, with astonishment, that it was a letter from the Cardinal Fleury, prime minister of France, to the Queen of Hungary; in which he informed her, that the King of France would guarantee to her Silesia and Moravia, if she would give up to the emperor Bohemia and part of Upper Austria.

Frederic requested of the general, to be allowed to keep the letter for a few days; and the latter consented. On his return to his own quarters, Frederic said, in the presence of some of his generals, "The cardinal takes me for a fool, and wants to betray me; but I will try and prevent him." He immediately sent orders to the Count de Podevils to enter into negotiations

with Lord Hyndford; and then wrote to the Marshal de Broglio, to announce his victory of Chotusitz, in the following terms: — "I am quits with my allies, for my troops have just gained a complete victory. It now becomes your duty to profit by this success without delay, the neglect of which, you would have to answer for to your allies. I pray God that he may keep you always in his holy and worthy protection.

"FREDERIC."*

The style of this letter surprised the two French marshals, Broglio and Belle-Isle; and they were farther astonished by the account of an English courier, who had been taken prisoner at Prague, and who informed them, that, at Vienna, the treaty of peace between the Queen of Hungary and the King of Prussia was considered as nearly settled. This intelligence induced the Marshal de Belle-Isle to go forthwith to the camp of Frederic, in order to ascertain from him the truth or falsehood of these reports. The King of Prussia told the marshal, frankly, the state of the case. "I believe," said he, "that the treaty you allude to is as good as concluded. I have prescribed the conditions of peace to the Queen of Hungary, and she accepts them. Having, therefore, all that I want,

* Vie de Frederic II.

I make peace; and all the world, in my situation, would do the same. At the same time, if I abandon the alliance of the emperor, I do not, on that account, desert the interests of that prince; but the Queen of Hungary, by conceding all I have demanded of her, leaves me no pretext for continuing the war." To this speech the marshal had the insolence to reply, "Is it possible, sire, that you can dare to abandon the best of your allies, and to deceive so respectable a monarch as the King of France." Frederic looked at him with an air of indignant disdain, and said, while he put into his hands the cardinal's letter, "And *you*, sir, do *you* dare to talk to me in this manner?" Belle-Isle read the letter, and retired in confusion, secretly cursing the cardinal and his conduct.

Thus ended the alliance between Prussia and France, in which, as Frederic himself allows, "each party wished to be more cunning than the other."* The defection of the King of Prussia, seemed to be the signal for the reviving fortunes of Maria Theresa. Her troops, under the command of Prince Charles of Lorraine, obtained considerable advantages, and at length succeeded in shutting up the two French marshals within the walls of Prague. In spite of some successful sorties, the French army was in

* Histoire de mon Temps.

a perilous situation; and famine, and its concomitant evils, began to make great ravages in it. At length, the Marshal de Maillebois and the Count de Saxe, sent from France to their assistance, arrived; and created a diversion, which enabled the Marshal de Broglio to escape from Prague; leaving still there, however, Belle-Isle, at the head of twenty-four thousand men.* The latter was again blockaded, and want of provisions reduced his army to nine thousand; with whom, eventually, in December 1742, he made his escape to Egra.†

Meanwhile, Frederic had returned to Berlin to enjoy his successes. He was followed to his capital by the diplomates of different nations, "whose negotiations," as he himself expresses it, "never ended." The English wished to draw the King of Prussia into the war, which they were about to undertake against the French; the French were anxious to engage him in

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

† Frederic, in one of his letters to Voltaire, thus characterizes the different French generals: —

"Que ce Broglio toujours fuyant,
Reduisant sa troupe en fumée;
Que Maillebois toujours errant,
Menant promener son armée;
Que Ségur le capituleur,
Et les autres transis de peur."

Supplement aux Œuvres posthumes de Frederic II.

measures, which were incompatible with the neutrality he had obliged himself to preserve; the emperor solicited his mediation; but the king remained unmoved. The longer the war continued, the more the house of Austria exhausted its resources; and the longer Prussia continued at peace, the more she gained strength. The great difficulty, in this conjuncture, was, so to maintain the balance of equality between the belligerent powers, that one should not gain too much ascendancy over the other. It was necessary to prevent the emperor from being dethroned, and the French from being driven out of Germany.*

But, although violent measures were interdicted to the Prussians by the peace of Breslau, they might, by their negotiations, obtain the desired end, as well as they could by arms; and the occasion of doing this presented itself without delay. The King of England had formed a plan of sending his troops, which were in Flanders, to the assistance of the Queen of Hungary. This step would have irremediably ruined the affairs of the emperor and of France. So pressing a danger obliged the King of Prussia to employ the strongest representations; he even went so far as to menace the King of England with invading his electorate, if he ven-

* Histoire de mon Temps.

tured to send his troops across the Rhine, in order to introduce them into the empire without the consent of the Germanic body. By milder arguments the Dutch allowed themselves to be persuaded, not to join their troops to those of the allies of the Queen of Hungary; and the French, having thus some breathing time afforded to them, were enabled to take measures for their own defence.

The Prussians were not equally successful in the plan they had formed for the support of the emperor. This project had for its basis, the reinforcement of the troops of this prince in Bavaria. The French had two reasons for wishing for its success; the first being, that if they abandoned Bavaria, they would be obliged to repass the Rhine, and to think only of defending their own territories; the second, because, having made an emperor, it was discreditable for them afterwards to abandon him, and to deliver him up, as it were, to the mercy of his enemies. But their generals had lost their heads, and a terror, which was beyond the controul of reason, guided them. In order, in some degree, to make up for this failure in the French troops, a plan was concerted, for forming an association of the circles of the empire, which might set on foot a neutral army. Under this pretext, the King of Prussia would have been able to have joined his forces to those of the

other Germanic princes, and this army would have covered and protected Bavaria. The affair failed of success, through the servile fear, which the sovereigns of the empire had of the house of Austria. The Queen of Hungary threatened, the princes trembled, and the diet would decide nothing. If France had supported this project, by some sums of money distributed judiciously, it would have succeeded.*

Thus finished the year 1742, the varied events of which were only the prelude to the war, which afterwards was carried on with still greater violence. The French were the only persons who were desirous for peace. The King of England, who was too much prejudiced with the notion of the weakness of the government of France, thought that a single campaign would be sufficient to overthrow it; while the Queen of Hungary concealed her ambition under the pretext of a legitimate defence. Prussia endeavoured to profit by the tranquillity she enjoyed, to restore her finances. Her resources were expended: it became necessary laboriously to collect fresh ones; to perfect what was still defective in the receipts of taxes in Silesia; and to pay the debts of the Austrians to the English. The renewal of the fortifications of five towns was at the same time undertaken—

* Histoire de mon Temps.

those of Glogau, Brieg, Neisse, Glatz, and Cosel. An augmentation of the army to the amount of eighteen thousand men was also made. These measures of course required a great outlay of money; and their execution was therefore only to be accelerated by rigid economy. The defence of Silesia was entrusted to an army of thirty-five thousand men, who had also been themselves the instruments of the conquest of this province. Thus, instead of the Prussian troops being enervated by their tranquillity, the time of peace became for them a school of war; magazines were formed in the towns; the cavalry acquired dexterity and intelligence; and all the different parts of the military establishment concurred, with an equal ardour, in the enforcement of a strict discipline, similar to that which, in former days, rendered the Romans the conquerors of all nations.*

* Histoire de mon Temps.

CHAPTER III.

PROSPECTS OF FREDERIC IN 1743. — BATTLE OF DETTINGEN. — DESTITUTE CONDITION OF THE EMPEROR. — FREDERIC IMPROVES HIS TERRITORIES, AND ADDS OST-FRIZE TO THEM. — VOLTAIRE AT BERLIN: — HIS DESCRIPTION OF FREDERIC'S LIFE: — HIS NEGOTIATIONS. — NEGOTIATIONS WITH FRANCE AND RUSSIA. — ALLIANCE FORMED AT FRANKFORT. — TREATY OF WORMS. — FREDERIC'S DECLARATION AGAINST THE COURT OF VIENNA, AND RENEWAL OF HOSTILITIES. — HE ENTERS BOHEMIA, AND TAKES PRAGUE. — ILLNESS OF LEWIS THE FIFTEENTH. — THE PRUSSIANS RETREAT. — FREDERIC'S DIFFICULTIES INCREASE. — CAPTURE OF THE GARRISON OF PRAGUE. — RESULTS OF THE CAMPAIGN TO FREDERIC. — OPERATIONS IN ITALY. — PRINCE OF LORRAINE DEFEATED.

At the commencement of the year 1743 the King of Prussia's own prospects were in every way prosperous; and the more so, as Voltaire observes, "because all the other powers were suffering." He adds, "princes now-a-days ruin themselves by war; Frederic had enriched himself by it." * He had, however, the disappointment of seeing the Queen of Hungary's forces become every day more successful. The Bavarian emperor, whose election he had done so much to procure, was driven from all his terri-

* Memoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire, ecrits par lui-même.

tories. The French were obliged by the Prince of Lorraine and the Austrians, to retreat with discredit to the western bank of the Rhine; while another French army, under the command of the Marshal de Noailles, having under him his nephew, the Duke de Grammont, and the Count d'Harcourt, was beaten by the combined forces of England, Hanover, and Austria, on the plains of Dettingen, near the Main.

This latter event took place in the month of June 1743. George the Second, King of England, commanded his troops in person, having under him the celebrated Lord Stair.* The Austrians were led by the Count de Neuperg. The French commenced the attack. The king was on horseback, and rode forward to reconnoitre the enemy: his horse, frightened at the cannonading, ran away with his majesty, and nearly carried him into the midst of the

* John (Dalrymple) second Earl of Stair, born July 20th 1673, died May 9th 1747, after having filled various offices, both civil and military, with credit and ability. He was trained to war under the Duke of Marlborough, whose politics he also espoused. It is to him that Lewis the Fourteenth is reported to have said, when in the year 1714 Lord Stair was reproaching him with the works undertaken in the canal of Mardick, contrary to the stipulations of the treaty of Utrecht, "Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, j'ai toujours été le maitre chez moi, quelquefois chez les autres; ne m'en faites pas souvenir." The ambassador, however, notwithstanding this speech, obliged the king to discontinue his proceedings.

French lines: fortunately, one of his attendants succeeded in stopping him. George then abandoned his horse, and fought on foot at the head of his Hanoverian battalions. With his sword drawn, and his body placed in the attitude of a fencing-master, who is about to make a lunge in carte, he continued to expose himself without flinching to the enemies' fire.* The Duke of Cumberland distinguished himself at the head of the guards, and gave proofs not only of that valour which has never been contested to him, —but also of a degree of humanity, which was not always supposed to belong to his character. Though wounded, he would not allow his wound to be dressed, till the surgeon had first attended to a French prisoner, who had suffered more severely than himself, saying, "I insist upon your attending first to this officer—he is in a worse state than I am—and he might chance not to be able to get assistance, which will not happen to me." †

The Parisians called this day, "the day of the broken batons ‡;" because Grammont and Harcourt had both urged the attack of the English, hoping each to gain thereby the baton of a marshal of France. After this disaster, the Marshal de Noailles went to see the Emperor

* Histoire de mon Temps.

† Voltaire, Siecle de Louis XV.

‡ "La journée des batons rompus."

Charles the Seventh, whom he found at Frankfort, overwhelmed with disappointment — without territories, without hope, and not possessed even of sufficient resources for the subsistence of his family. He gave him a letter of credit for forty thousand crowns, which was thankfully received. To such a degree of destitution was the majesty of the *Roman empire* reduced.*

Frederic, in his history of his own time, remarks with great frankness: "The victory of Dettingen by no means gave so much pleasure to the King of Prussia, as it had done to the King of England." † He then proceeds to explain in detail the fears he entertained, lest the ill-success of their arms might tempt the French government, which was become weaker than ever since the death of Fleury ‡, to abandon entirely the cause of the emperor. The conclusion of the campaign was, however, somewhat more favourable to the arms of France, than the earlier part of it had been. The designs of the English and Austrians, after the battle of Dettingen, were to penetrate into Lorraine, and from thence into France. With this

* Voltaire, Siecle de Louis XV.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

‡ The Cardinal Fleury died at the age of 90, January 29, 1743, "leaving the affairs of the war, of the marine, of the finances, and of politics generally, in a state of crisis, which impaired the credit of his ministry, but not the tranquillity of his mind." — Voltaire.

view it was determined, that the King of England should pass the Rhine at Mayence, and then march into Alsace; while the Prince of Lorraine was to cross the same river at Bâle, take possession of Lorraine, and then place his victorious troops in winter quarters in Burgundy and Champagne. George passed the Rhine without difficulty, and proceeded towards Worms; but the Prince of Lorraine was not so fortunate. Having sent a portion of his army across the river, and also taken possession of an island in the middle of it, he was subsequently driven from both these posts; and retired into the Brisgau, where he remained inactive during the rest of the year.

Meanwhile negotiations and intrigues of various kinds commenced at the English camp at Worms. It is difficult, at this distance of time, and indeed uninteresting, to trace these in their different ramifications and bearings; and to penetrate what Frederic so properly calls, "the abyss of bad faith *," which was their result. Still, a short sketch of the proceedings of the different powers is necessary, to fill up the history of the year 1743. The principal event of the negotiations of this period, was the accession of Holland to the alliance of England and Austria. This was brought about by Lord Car-

* "Cet abyme de mauvaise foi."

teret *, who, at this time, held the office of secretary of state in the English cabinet, and had, in that capacity, attended upon his master during the campaign. The States-general, in consequence of certain stipulations in their treaty, sent a reinforcement of 14,000 men to the camp at Worms.

Lord Carteret was equally successful in preventing an alliance, which was preparing, between Charles Emmanuel, King of Sardinia, and the court of France; and in persuading that prince, instead, to conclude one with his master and the Queen of Hungary. The price of the King of Sardinia's friendship was, a portion of the Italian territories of the house of Austria. The French government was furious at the unfavourable result of their negotiations with

* John Lord Carteret, afterwards Earl of Granville, born 1690, died 1763. Horace Walpole includes him in the list of the *only five great men* he ever knew. This distinction, however, he clearly did not merit; though, as Lord Chesterfield observes, "he had great parts, and a most uncommon share of learning for a man of quality. He was one of the best speakers in the House of Lords, both in a declamatory and argumentative way."—"In business he was bold, enterprizing, and overbearing. He had been bred up in high monarchical, that is, tyrannical principles of government, which his ardent and imperious temper made him think were the only rational and practicable ones."—"He was neither ill-natured nor vindictive, and had a great contempt for money: his ideas were all above it. In social life he was an agreeable, good-humoured, an instructive companion; a great, but entertaining talker."

Charles Emmanuel; and a body of French troops was, in consequence, sent to join the Spanish army in the neighbourhood of Genoa, commanded by the Marquis de la Mina, under the Infant Don Philip. These forces, when united, made an attempt to penetrate through the passages of the mountains into Piedmont; but were repulsed with loss, and were finally obliged to retire into Dauphiny.

At the court of Petersburgh the intrigues of the contending parties were, if possible, more active than in any other part of Europe. The Marquis de la Chetardie, the French envoy — Mardefeld, who appeared in the same capacity for the King of Prussia—and the Marquis Botta, sent by the court of Vienna, severally endeavoured to win the Czarina Elizabeth and her ministers to take part with their respective sovereigns. No decisive result was, however, obtained by any of them.

Frederic, as he informs us himself, did not leave the task of negotiating entirely to his ministers, and ambassadors, but sometimes undertook that office in his own person. "In the peace which Prussia at present enjoyed," observes he, "two interesting objects were always present to the mind of its sovereign, — the support of the emperor, and a general peace. With regard to the emperor, as France had abandoned him, the only means that remained of support-

ing him, was by the formation of a league of the German princes, who would raise the standard in defence of their chief. Those sentiments and views had already been attempted to be suggested to these sovereigns, but in vain. The King of Prussia, who was anxious, by new efforts, to lead them to what their interest and their glory equally demanded, undertook to open the matter to them in person. Under pretext of paying a visit to his sisters, the Margravines of Bareith and Anspach, he made a journey in the empire, and pushed on as far as Hohen-Oettingen, feigning a curiosity to see the remains of the Bavarian army; but really with a view of deliberating with the Marshal Seckendorff, upon the means to be taken to assist the emperor. All the attempts, however, that could be made, all the representations that could be brought forward, and all the reasons that could be urged, proved equally fruitless. The enthusiasts in favour of the house of Austria were willing to sacrifice themselves for her; while those who were attached to the emperor, were so intimidated by the reverses which had overwhelmed that prince, that they thought they were certain to lose their territories the moment they decided to assist him." *

The ill fortune which attended Frederic in

* Histoire de mon Temps.

his negotiations in favour of the emperor, did not, however, extend to the improvements he was also employing himself in, with regard to the internal state of his own kingdom. In the course of this year*, the great canal of Plauen, which shortens the communication between the Elbe and the Oder, was made. The harbour of Stettin was dug, and the canal of the Swine rendered navigable. Establishments for manufacturing silk were instituted; while the culture of the silkworm became a source of increasing wealth to the inhabitants of the country. The academy of sciences was refounded; and received among its members many illustrious names; while Maupertuis, then just returned from his celebrated admeasurement of the earth, in his journey to the polar circle, and at the height of his reputation, became its first president.† Nor were these various ameliorations carried on without the personal inspection of Frederic. Wherever improvements or changes were to be made, the king was sure to be present; and all his leisure was, in fact, occupied in tours to the different parts of his dominions; in which he enquired into the different wants of his people, and devised means for their relief; encouraged public works already commenced, and planned fresh ones.

* 1743. † Histoire de mon Temps.

During this interval of peace, an important addition to his territories devolved upon Frederic; namely, the duchy of Ost-Frise, which fell to him by agreement, in consequence of the extinction of the reigning family. The last Duke of Ost-Frise died May 25th, 1744; and the King of Prussia immediately sent a detachment of the garrison of Wesel to take possession of his territories, in spite of the remonstrances of the King of England, as Duke of Brunswick-Lunenburg, and of the Count of Wied; who also both of them laid claim to the succession. The rights of Frederic to this duchy were, however, incontestible, as they rested upon a treaty of succession, made in due form in the year 1694, and sanctioned by the Emperor Leopold. As soon as Frederic had obtained possession of Ost-Frise, he proceeded to ameliorate the condition of the inhabitants; and obliged the Dutch, who, in consequence of their advances of money to the sovereigns of the country, had held garrisons in the towns of Embden and Leerort for above a hundred years, to withdraw their troops upon promise of payment.*

During this year Frederic married his next brother the Prince Augustus William, to Louisa Amelia Princess of Brunswick, the sister of his own queen. This marriage was so far an im-

* Histoire de mon Temps.

portant event, as it produced an heir to the crown. On the 25th of September 1744 a boy was born, who became in the sequel King of Prussia, by the name of Frederic William the Second.

At the end of the year 1743, Voltaire arrived at Berlin. His visit to that capital was to a certain extent connected with politics; inasmuch as he was charged with the mission of sounding the King of Prussia, and of finding out whether he was inclined to unite again with France against the house of Austria. This information, it was thought, his intimacy with that monarch would make him more likely to obtain than any one else. Frederic mentions the diplomatic powers of Voltaire in slighting terms. "As he had some protectors at Versailles, he thought that that was a sufficient reason for giving himself the airs of a negotiator. His brilliant imagination ran riot in the vast field of politics. He brought no credentials with him, and his mission became a farce, and a mere pleasantry."* But though the King of Prussia treats the diplomacy of Voltaire thus lightly, his anxiety to see the diplomate himself at Berlin was great. This we may judge of from the following letter, which he wrote to him when his leaving France was first in question.

* Histoire de mon Temps.

October 7th 1743.

"France has thus far been considered as the asylum of unfortunate monarchs; I wish that my capital should become the temple of great men. Come to it then, my dear Voltaire, and give whatever orders can tend to render a residence in it agreeable to you. My wish is to please you, and wishing this, my intention is to enter entirely into your views.

"Choose whatever apartment or house you like; regulate yourself all that you want, either for the comfort or luxury of life; make your arrangements in such a way, that you may be happy and comfortable; and leave it to me to provide for the rest. You will be always entirely free, and master to choose your own way of life; my only pretension is to enchain you by friendship and kindness.

"You will have passports for the post-horses, and whatever else you may ask. I hope to see you on Wednesday; and I shall then profit by the few moments of leisure which remain to me, to enlighten myself with the blaze of your powerful genius. I entreat you to believe I shall always be the same towards you. Adieu."*

Voltaire's own account of his journey to Berlin, and its causes, are very detailed. The ex-

* Supplement aux Œuvres posthumes de Frederic II.

treme ill-will he bore to the King of Prussia at the time he wrote it, ought to make us very cautious of believing his facts when he speaks of that monarch; but many of the circumstances related in it, he could have had no reason for falsifying, or colouring too highly; and they are therefore extremely curious; while, coming as they do from the pen of so agreeable a writer, they cannot fail to be entertaining. "The public affairs of France," says he, "continued in as bad a state after the death of the Cardinal de Fleury as during the two last years of his administration. The House of Austria rose again from its ashes. France was cruelly pressed upon by that power, and by England. No other resource remained to us but the chance of regaining the King of Prussia, who, having drawn us into the war, had abandoned us as soon as it was convenient to him so to do. It was thought advisable, under these circumstances, that *I* should be sent to that monarch, in order to sound his intentions, and to see if he could not be persuaded to avert the storm, which would be sure, sooner or later, to fall from Vienna upon him, after it had first fallen on us; and also, if he could not lend us for the moment a hundred thousand men; and by so doing, the better secure to himself the possession of Silesia.

This idea came from M. de Richelieu and Madame de Chateauroux: the king adopted it;

and M. Amelot, the minister for foreign affairs, was charged to hasten my departure. A pretext, however, was necessary. I took that of my quarrel with the Ex-Bishop of Mirepoix.* The king approved of this expedient. I wrote, in consequence, to the King of Prussia, that I could no longer endure the persecutions of this *Theatin*†, and that I should take refuge under the protection of a philosophical sovereign, far from the disputes of this bigot. As this prelate was accustomed to sign, *L'anc.*‡ eveq. de Mirepoix, and as his handwriting was sufficiently illegible, we were accustomed to read *L'ane* de Mirepoix, instead of *L'ancien.* This was a fertile subject for jokes; and never was negotiation more gay. The King of Prussia, who was never backward, when it was a question of laughing at monks and prelates of the court, answered me with a deluge of sarcasms upon the *Ane de Mirepoix,* and entreated me to come to him. I took great care to show my letters and his answers. The bishop was informed of this. He went to complain of me to Lewis the

* This quarrel had its origin in the bishop's having persuaded the king, to refuse his approval of the election of Voltaire to the place in the French Academy, vacant by the death of the Cardinal de Fleury. The bishop held the office of "Ministre de la Feuille des Benefices."

† The bishop had been a monk of the order called "*Theatins.*"

‡ For *ancien.*

Fifteenth; because, as he said, I made him pass for a fool at foreign courts. The king answered him, that it was a thing agreed upon, and that he must not mind it. This answer of Lewis, which was not in his character, always struck me as extraordinary. For myself, I had the pleasure, at the same time, to revenge myself upon a bishop, who had excluded me from the academy; to make a very agreeable journey; and to put myself in the way of being of service to the king and the state.

"When I arrived at Berlin, the king lodged me in his palace, as he had done in my former journeys. He then led the same sort of life, which he had always done since he came to the throne. This way of life merits some detail to be bestowed upon it. He rose at five * in summer, and six in winter. If you wish to know the royal ceremonies of his *lever*, in what consisted the great and little entrées, what were the functions of his great almoner, of his great chamberlain, of his first gentleman of the bedchamber, of his pages; I will tell you in reply, that a single footman came to light his fire, to dress and to shave him; indeed, he dressed himself almost without any assistance. His bedroom was a handsome one: a rich balustrade,

* As we have seen before, Frederic rose at four; but Voltaire never regarded accuracy in details.

made of silver, and ornamented with well executed Cupids of the same metal, seemed to guard a bed, of which the curtains were seen. But behind the curtains, instead of a bed, there was a library; and as for the king's bed, it was a wretched truckle bed, with a little mattress, placed in the corner of the room behind a skreen. Marcus Aurelius and Julian, his favourite heroes, and the greatest men among the stoics, were not worse lodged.

"The king's *prime minister* now arrived by the back stairs, with a great mass of papers under his arm. This *prime minister* was a clerk, who lodged on the second floor in the house of Federsdorf, the soldier who was become valet-de-chambre and favourite, having formerly served the king when he was prisoner at Custrin. The secretaries of state sent all their dispatches to this clerk *, who made extracts from them. The king had the answer written on the margin, in a very few words. All the affairs of the kingdom were thus gone through in a short time. The secretaries of state, or the other ministers, had very seldom audiences of the king; there were some of them, indeed, to whom he had never spoken. The king his father had established such regularity in the finances; every

* This person, whom Voltaire calls a clerk, was the chief or favourite secretary.

thing was done with such military exactness; and the obedience to orders was so unlimited; that four hundred leagues of country were governed like the estate of an abbey.

"About eleven o'clock the king, in boots, reviewed, in his garden, his regiment of guards; and at the same hour all the colonels did the same in all the provinces. After the parade came the dinner. The princes his brothers, the general officers, and one of two of his chamberlains, partook of his dinner; which was as good as it could be, in a country where there is no game, and no tolerable butcher's meat, and where all the flour is obliged to be brought from Magdeburg.

"After dinner the king retired alone into his cabinet, and made verses till five or six o'clock. At that hour a young man, named D'Arget, who had been secretary to Valori, the French envoy, came and read to him. A concert commenced at seven, in which the king performed on the flute as well as the best professional musician. The pieces of music executed were also often of the king's composition, for there was no art he did not cultivate; and he would not, among the Greeks, have undergone the mortification which befel Epaminondas, of confessing that he did not understand music." *

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de Voltaire.

Voltaire concludes his account of the King of Prussia's day with an account of his suppers, which is rather too scandalous for quotation.

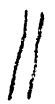
As a contrast to the simplicity of Frederic's ordinary life, Voltaire gives a magnificent account of his splendour on state occasions.

"When the king went to Berlin," says he, "he exhibited a great magnificence, on the days of public ceremonies. It was a fine spectacle for vain men, that is, for almost the whole world, to see him at table, surrounded by twenty princes of the empire, served on the most beautiful gold plate in Europe, and attended by thirty handsome pages, and as many young Heyducs, superbly dressed, and carrying great dishes of massive gold. Upon these occasions, and upon these alone, the great officers of the crown appeared. After these banquets, the court attended the opera in the great theatre, three hundred feet long, built by one of Frederic's chamberlains, named Knobelsdorf, without the assistance of an architect. The most admirable singers and the best dancers were, at this time, in the pay of the King of Prussia." *

Voltaire had evidently a very different idea of his diplomatic powers, and of their success, from that entertained by Frederic. He dwells upon his negotiation and its results with much com-

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de Voltaire.

placency. " In the midst of fêtes, operas, and suppers, my secret negotiation advanced. The king allowed me to speak to him upon all subjects; and I often intermingled questions respecting France and Austria, in conversations relating to the Eneid or Livy. The discussion sometimes was very animated: the king became excited, and then told me, that as long as the court of France continued to knock at every door in order to obtain peace, he would never go to war in their favour. I sent him, from my room to his apartment, my reflections upon the subject, written upon one side of a sheet of paper. He answered my bold remarks on the other side. I have still this document by me, in which I said to him, 'Can you doubt that the house of Austria will re-demand Silesia from you upon the first opportunity?' His answer, written in the margin, to this question was,



" Ils seront reçu, Biribi,
" A la façon de Barbari, mon ami!"

This negotiation, of an entirely new kind, concluded by an harangue from the King of Prussia, in one of his moments of irritation, against *his dear uncle*, the King of England. These two sovereigns disliked one another. The King of Prussia used to say, 'George is the uncle of Frederic; but George is not the uncle of the King of Prussia.' At length he said to

me, 'Let France declare war against England, and *I* will march.' This was all I desired. I returned as quickly as possible to the court of France; and gave an account of my journey. I gave them the same hopes, which I had myself been led to entertain at Berlin, and which did not prove delusive. The following spring the King of Prussia made a fresh treaty with the King of France. He advanced into Bohemia with 100,000 men, while the Austrians were in Alsatia."

Voltaire left Berlin during the month of April 1744, fully persuaded that the war which was about to commence in Europe, was the fruit of his intrigues. It would, however, appear, that the real cause of the renewal of hostilities was, the suspicions entertained by Frederic of the sincerity of his present allies. The King of England was always his secret enemy; and the Queen of Hungary was obviously so, from the nature of circumstances. He had been informed, that in the correspondence between these two sovereigns, Maria Theresa had complained of the cession of Silesia, which she had been compelled to make. To this George had answered, "Madam, that which is good to take, is good also to be retaken."* He also discovered, that it was the intention of England and Austria to force France to make peace, without stipulating

* "Madame, ce qui est bon à prendre, est bon à rendre."

for any guarantee of Silesia.* The court of Saxony had also been induced to join these confederates; and the consequence was, an alliance, of which one of the secret articles was, the guarantee to Maria Theresa of all the territories, to which she was entitled by various former treaties, including of course the province of Silesia.

The King of Prussia determined to make this clause of the treaty the ground of war; but before he proceeded to hostilities, it became necessary to strengthen his communications with France. With this view he sent the Count de Rottenbourg to the court of Versailles. Through him Frederic demanded, that the French army on the Rhine should pass that river, and endeavour to regain possession of Bavaria; while, in Italy, the French and Spaniards should attack the Austrian and Sardinian dominions, and their fleets contend with those of England. Meanwhile he himself promised to invade Bohemia, and to occupy the Austrians as much as possible in that part of their territories.

These preliminaries agreed upon, no farther negotiations were necessary, except with Russia —always the most dangerous neighbour to the house of Brandenburgh. The present neutrality of that power was acquired, by the marriage of the Princess of Anhalt Zerbst, afterwards

* Histoire de mon Temps.

the too celebrated Empress Catherine, with the Grand Duke Peter of Russia, the nephew of the Empress Elizabeth, and her heir. The father of the young princess was a field marshal in the service of Prussia, in which country she herself had been brought up. Her mother was a princess of Holstein, and sister of the Prince Adolphus Frederic of Holstein Eutin, who was to be the successor to the throne of Sweden. In order to make the alliance of family friendship as strict as possible, Frederic, about the same time, married his sister Ulrica to the future King of Sweden. She thus became aunt to the new grand duchess; and Frederic flattered himself that this double union would insure the friendship and co-operation of Russia.* But the ties of consanguinity in sovereigns are never strong enough, to weigh in the scale against political interests or prejudices.

Thus prepared for war, the King of Prussia signed his treaty with France on the 5th of April; and on the 27th of May, a more extended alliance was formed at Frankfort between the King of France, the emperor, the King of Prussia, the elector palatine, and the King of Sweden, in his quality of Landgrave of Hesse.†

On the other hand, the King of England, the Queen of Hungary, and the King of Sar-

* Histoire de mon Temps. † Vie de Frederic II.

dinia, to whom were afterwards added Holland and Saxony, had signed the treaty at Worms, which has since borne the name of the triple alliance.* This union was ostensibly directed against the emperor; but, in reality, was much more so against the King of Prussia.

The Kings of Prussia and France prepared to execute the stipulations they had entered into, by putting themselves at the head of their respective armies. The former published, previously, a sort of declaration; in which he alleged as his reason for going to war, the necessity to appease the troubles of the empire, to re-establish order and tranquillity in it, and to restore its laws to their full force. He reproached the Queen of Hungary, with the cruelties her troops had committed in the hereditary dominions of the emperor, and with her whole conduct to that unfortunate prince; accused her of the design of destroying the Germanic liberties; and of continuing the plan, pursued by the house of Austria for above a century, for reducing the princes of the empire to a state of slavery. In support of these assertions, he referred to the conduct of the court of Vienna for the last two years. After detailing other griefs of a less important nature, he con-

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

cluded by stating, that he asked for nothing for himself; and that he only had recourse to arms, for the purpose of restoring to the empire of Germany its liberty, to the emperor his dignity, and to Europe repose.* This manifesto was communicated to the foreign ministers resident at Berlin on the 10th of August; and on the 13th, the king, accompanied by his brothers, the hereditary prince and Prince Henry, left his capital to join his troops; "while the court of Dresden murmured; that of Warsaw was furious; that of London saw it had been over-reached; and that of Vienna began to be frightened."†

The Prussian army, consisting of 70,000 men, was divided into three columns. The first, conducted by the king himself, marched through Saxony; the second, under the orders of Prince Leopold of Anhalt Dessau, took its course through Lusatia; while the third, commanded by Marshal Schwerin, passed through Silesia. They thus all entered Bohemia by different ways, but re-united on the 4th of September before the gates of the city of Prague.‡ Frederic determined to invest this important town, and, in consequence, the trenches were opened on the 10th of September. On the 12th, the Margave William of Brandenburgh was killed in the

* Vie de Frederic II. † Histoire de mon Temps.
‡ Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

trenches by a cannon ball.* On the 16th, the Baron de Harsch, the governor, surrendered the place, and with it a garrison consisting of 18,000 men.†

The King of Prussia placed a sufficient garrison in Prague, and obliged the inhabitants to take the oath of allegiance to the emperor.‡ The consequence of this success was, that the Prussian troops spread themselves through Bohemia, and took possession of the towns of Tabor, Budweis, and Frauenburg.§ But while these uninterrupted advantages in Bohemia promised the most brilliant conclusion to the campaign, circumstances, which could not have been foreseen, had arisen in other quarters, which, before long, entirely changed the face of affairs.

Lewis the Fifteenth was preparing, as has been before stated, to imitate his brother of Prussia, and put himself at the head of his army on the Rhine. His mistress, the Duchess de Chateauroux, encouraged this martial ardour in the breast of her royal lover; and his natural

* Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

† Mémoires de Frederic Baron de Trenck.

‡ This circumstance would lead us to believe in the existence of the secret article in the treaty of Frankfort, in favour of the claims of the emperor to Bohemia, which were to be made good, on condition of the cession of certain portions of that country to Prussia; though it was always denied by the contracting parties.

§ Vie de Frederic II.

indolence was overcome, partly by her encouragements, and partly by an undefined sort of jealousy of the exploits of Frederic. The King of France had already been present at the taking of several towns in the Low Countries, when he heard of the successes of the Austrian army, under the command of Prince Charles of Lorraine; which had passed the Rhine, and spread terror through Alsace and Lorraine. He immediately proceeded, with a reinforcement of 40,000 men, to Metz, where his army was to assemble, and from whence he intended to march against the Austrians. But on the 8th of August, a malignant putrid fever seized upon him, which reduced him to the brink of the grave. His unprophetic subjects, and more particularly the Parisians, "showed the deepest grief at the malady of their sovereign; prayers were offered up for his recovery in all the churches; but the orison could hardly be recited by the priest, or repeated by the congregation, for the sobs which burst forth from all present." * The business of life, trade, commerce, and the hours of rest and refreshment, were alike forgotten in the anxiety of all classes for the life of a man, who was destined, for a long series of years, to be the scourge and the curse of them and of their children.

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

The life of Lewis was spared, unhappily for himself, as well as for his infatuated people: but in the meanwhile the objects of the campaign had been neglected. The Marshals de Noailles and de Coigni, upon whom devolved the conduct of the French army, allowed the Prince of Lorraine and the Marshal Brown, who commanded under him, to re-cross the Rhine without loss, and to pursue their course against Frederic, at the head of 50,000 men. In vain did Marshal Schmettau, who had been sent to Lewis by Frederic, endeavour to incite the French generals to activity: their supineness or their caution was not to be overcome; and the Austrians pursued their way to Bohemia, unmolested, and with great celerity. On their arrival in that country they were joined by a large body of Saxons; nor could the King of Prussia prevent their junction with the body of Austrian troops, which, under the command of Bathyani, had retreated before his victorious army, upon his first arrival before Prague.*

The Prussian army had already been much incommoded by the large bodies of Croatians, Pandours, and other light troops, who were scattered over the country; and who lost no opportunity of cutting off parties of stragglers, seizing upon convoys and magazines, and

* Histoire de mon Temps.

harassing their enemies by every means in their power. But when to these inconveniences were added, the approach of the Prince of Lorraine, whose intention was to cut off the communication of the Prussian army with Prague, by passing the Muldau behind them, and a great scarcity of provisions in the Prussian camp, Frederic found that he had no course left him but that of retreat, which ~~which~~ was in itself a measure of difficult accomplishment. Considerable loss was sustained, as the army retraced its steps through Bohemia: and the enemy, superior to them at all points, pressed so closely upon their rear, that they were obliged to abandon the garrisons of Tabor, Budweis, and Frauenburg. More than 3,000 Prussian troops were taken prisoners in these towns.

The only advantage obtained by the Prussians, during their unfortunate retreat, was at Beneschau, an important post, which it was necessary to take from the Austrian detachment who guarded it, before they were supported by the arrival of the Prince of Lorraine's army. Marshal Schwerin, at the head of 15,000 men, seized upon the camp of Beneschau, and obtained possession of the large magazines, which had been collected there by the Austrians.*

This success inspired a wish to Frederic, to attack the Prince of Lorraine; which he thought,

* Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

having the advantage of the almost inexpugnable camp of Beneschau to fall back upon, might be done without great hazard. Accordingly, on the 24th of October, he marched forward to offer battle to the enemies, but found them so advantageously posted, that he was obliged to abandon the intention, and to fall back upon his camp; from which he was soon driven by the want of provisions, and obliged to continue his retreat.

Upon one occasion during the retreat from Prague, the King of Prussia appears himself to have run a great risk of being taken prisoner. Trenck, in his Memoirs, thus relates the circumstance: — "One day the king entered the town of Collin, with his horse and foot guards, the picquets of cavalry, all his staff, the second and third battalion of guards, and the whole of the baggage. We had only four small field-pieces with us. The squadron to which I belonged was placed in the suburb. In the evening our advanced posts were driven back into the town, and the hussars of the enemy followed them in pell-mell. All the country round was covered with the light troops of the Austrians; and my commandant sent me to the king to take his orders. After having long searched for him, I at length found him at the top of the tower of the church, with a telescope in his hand. Never had I seen in him so much

uncertainty and anxiety, as at this moment. The order he gave me was, 'You must get out of this scrape as well as you can.' I had hardly got back to my post, when his adjutant-general followed me with the new order, 'To cross the town, and to remain on horseback in the opposite suburb.' We were but just arrived there, when it began to rain heavily, and the night became exceedingly dark. About nine o'clock at night, Trenck* approached us with his light troops and his Turkish music, and set fire to the houses, close to which we were posted. He soon discovered us, and began firing at us from the windows. The embarassment now became universal. The town was so full, that it was impossible for us to find place in it; besides, the gate was barricaded, and they were firing from the top of it with our little field-pieces. Trenck, meanwhile, had diverted the course of a rivulet; and by midnight we found our horses in water up to their bellies. We were really incapable of defending ourselves, and we were losing men and horses every minute. It is certain, if my cousin had not been obliged to desist from his attack, as he has since told me he was, we should have been all, the king included, taken prisoners: but a cannon ball crushed his foot; he was obliged to be carried

* The cousin of the author here quoted, who commanded the Pandours in the Austrian service.

away, and the enemy's fire ceased. The next day the Prince of Nassau came to our assistance. We left Collin; and, as we were marching, the king said to me 'Your terrible cousin might have given us a severe blow last night; but a deserter says he has been killed."*

The difficulties of the Prussian army augmented daily. The want of proper food produced universal sickness; the weather became bad as the season advanced; and the Austrian light troops were every day more enterprising. The losses of the Prussians, from these various causes, were considerable; and they considered themselves fortunate, when, at length, the commencement of December found the different divisions, of which the army was composed, on the Silesian side of the frontier.† The manner in which Frederic united and kept together the scattered detachments of his army, during all these retrograde movements, and conducted the mthrough their difficult retreat, in the presence of a superior force, has been universally considered, as a most remarkable proof of military skill and talent.

The only portion of the Prussian forces, which still remained in jeopardy, was the garrison of Prague, consisting of 11,000 men, and com-

* Mémoires de Frederic Baron de Trenck.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

manded by General Einsiedel. This body of troops marched out of Prague on the 26th of November, leaving behind its heavy artillery.* Einsiedel had taken his precautions ill, for while his troops were still marching out at one gate of the town, the Austrian Pandours were entering it at another. The consequence was, that the rear-guard of the garrison was much harassed during its retreat; while a body of Saxon troops, under the orders of the Chevalier de Saxe, attempted to stop its advance. To these disadvantages were added, the intense cold of the season, and the almost impassable state of the roads. In this emergency Einsiedel appears to have completely lost his head; and the troops under his command would have been the victims of this unfortunate circumstance, had it not been for the presence of mind of General Rottenbourg, who was with him. That officer took the command of the troops; and deceiving the Saxons as to his intentions, and availing himself of the diversion created by the approach from Silesia of the corps commanded by the Count de Nassau, which had been sent to his assistance, he contrived to pass through Lusatia, and so gained the frontiers of Silesia.† But the

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

garrison, which left Prague 11,000 strong, was reduced, during its retreat, to 6,000.*

During the course of the retreat of the Prussian troops, different skirmishes took place between detachments of the hostile armies, with various success: but the only one that deserves mention, on account of the singular gallantry of a small body of Prussian troops, and of their commander, occurred near Solnitz, on the Elbe. Through the neglect of the King of Prussia's patroles, the Prince of Lorraine had been allowed, to throw a bridge across the river, and was preparing to pass it; but Colonel Wedel, a Prussian officer commanding a battalion, discovering his intention, determined to resist it. Thrice did his small body repulse the Austrian grenadiers, though they were supported by the fire of fifty pieces of cannon; and thus he continued, singly and unaided, for five hours to resist the passage of the prince and his army. But the messengers, whom he had sent to the main body of the army to ask for assistance, having been killed by the way, he was at length obliged to retreat, which he did in good order and without loss.† "This gallant action," observes Frederic, "gained for Wedel the sur-

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

name of Leonidas. The Prince of Lorraine, astonished that a single Prussian battalion should have disputed with him the passage of the Elbe for five hours, said to his officers, 'The Queen of Hungary would be indeed fortunate if she had officers in her army like this hero!'" *

Thus ended this campaign, one of the most disastrous, which ever befel the King of Prussia. In the recapitulation of it, which he has himself left, he says, that no general committed more faults during the course of it, than he did himself. But the illness of the King of France, over which he had no controul, was the event upon which the issue of the war really turned. The general opposed to the king, Marshal Traun, who, in fact, commanded the army of the Prince of Lorraine, was also, it must be confessed, a man of talent, and took advantage of whatever favourable circumstances presented themselves. "The conduct of Marshal Traun in this campaign," remarks his opponent, "was a model of perfection, which every military man, who is fond of his profession, ought to study, in order to imitate it, if he has sufficient talents. The king himself allowed, that this campaign was his school in the art of war, and that M. de Traun was his preceptor." † Against such a commander, the retreat of Frederic through Bo-

* Histoire de mon Temps. † Ibid.

hemia, which, as has been already stated, is allowed on all hands to have been conducted with great ability, becomes considerably more admirable, than it would otherwise have been.

The reverses of the King of Prussia's arms by no means subdued his spirit. He left his army encamped in winter quarters in Silesia, under the command of the Prince Leopold of Anhalt-Dessau, and proceeded to Berlin on the 13th of December; in order to make, with the greatest possible activity, his preparations for the ensuing campaign, and to continue his negotiations with the different powers, who were friendly to his interests.

In Italy, the successes of the Prince de Conti, who commanded the French army destined to create a diversion in that country, were, during this campaign, more brilliant than solid. He passed the Col de Tende; took by assault Fort-Dauphin; penetrated into Piedmont; and defeated the King of Sardinia, who had endeavoured to prevent his besieging the town of Coni. These advantages were, however, rendered nugatory by the want of provisions, which obliged him to retire into Savoy, and thus to give up all the ground he had gained.* In the other parts of Italy, no event of importance took place; and by sea, an indecisive action between

* Histoire de mon Temps.

the English fleet and the combined ones of France and Spain, was the only result of great preparations on both sides.

Hardly had the King of Prussia quitted his army, when the Queen of Hungary, in the breast of whom, and of whose advisers, the success of the late campaign had revived the hopes of regaining Silesia, ordered her army to advance into that province.* On the 18th of December †, the Prince of Lorraine entered Upper Silesia, and the county of Glatz; while the Prussian corps of troops, stationed in that part of the province, retreated in good order towards Breslau. But Frederic returned immediately to his post; and took measures, with the old Prince of Anhalt-Dessau, for the resistance of the invaders, whose occupation of Silesia was not of long duration. On the 7th of January 1745, the Prince of Anhalt, having collected together a considerable body of troops near Neisse, marched against Marshal Traun, and obliged him to abandon his position at Neustadt, and to retire into Moravia. During this retreat the Austrian army bivouacked upon the snow for five nights; many perished by the cold; and considerable numbers deserted. ‡ The Prussians also attacked their rear guard, and took

* Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

† 1744.

‡ Histoire de mon Temps.

some prisoners. At the same time, the Count de Nassau cleared the country near Ratibor, and on the other side of the Oder, of the Hungarians who infested it. Three thousand of the troops of that nation were surprised at Ratibor, and were either taken prisoners, killed by the Prussians, or drowned in their attempts to pass the river. In the county of Glatz, the General Lehwald attacked the Austrians near Habelschwerd, and, after a severe engagement, completely routed them. These disasters entirely took away the fancy of the Austrians for invasion; and their army at length entered into winter quarters.*

* Histoire de mon Temps.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MARSHAL DE BELLE-ISLE TAKEN PRISONER. — DEATH OF THE EMPEROR. — CAMPAIGN OF 1745. — PRUSSIAN SUCCESSES. — ADVANCE OF THE PRINCE OF LORRAINE. — BATTLE OF HOHEN-FRIEDBERG, AND ITS RESULTS. — RETREAT OF THE PRINCE OF LORRAINE. — THE PRUSSIANS ENTER BOHEMIA. — FRANCIS GRAND DUKE OF TUSCANY ELECTED EMPEROR. — FREDERIC'S OFFERS OF PEACE REFUSED. — NEGOTIATIONS WITH GEORGE THE SECOND. — OPERATIONS IN BOHEMIA. — BATTLE OF SOOR. — THE AUSTRIANS RETIRE. — PROCEEDINGS IN ITALY AND FLANDERS. — CONCLUSION OF THE CAMPAIGN.

THE next remarkable event of the year 1745 was the misfortune which befel the Marshal de Belle-Isle, who was taken prisoner by the Hanoverian dragoons, as he was on his way from Paris to Berlin, charged with a diplomatic mission to the King of Prussia. Belle-Isle was sent prisoner to England, where he was confined at Windsor Castle for some months; and was only exchanged after the battle of Fontenoy. The court of Versailles complained of this affront, as a violation of the laws of nations; that of St. James's defended it: while the King of England was delighted to vex and mortify a man, whom he considered as the author of the war in Germany, and who, upon various occa-

sions, had shown himself hostile to the Hanoverian interests.*

On the 18th of January of this year died the unhappy Emperor of Germany, Charles the Seventh. "This was the only event wanting," observes Frederic, "to complete the confusion and embroilment, which already existed in the political relations of the European powers." In addition to the other subjects of dispute already in agitation, the succession to the imperial crown became a new apple of discord. The French government was anxious to give this dignity to Augustus the Third, King of Poland, and Elector of Saxony; but that prince, who received pay from the British government, and was in alliance with the Queen of Hungary, refused it; fearful of losing the subsidies of England, and the friendship of the court of Vienna. It soon became evident, that the imperial dignity must return again into the hands of the house of Austria; and it only depended upon the success of the war, whether they should also add fresh provinces to their hereditary dominions. †

The King of Prussia meanwhile found himself placed in a position of considerable danger. "Negotiation served but to show him the abysses, by which he was surrounded; war of-

* Histoire de mon Temps.

† Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

fered him great risks; and his finances only presented to him the spectacle of a total exhaustion of his resources."* The death of the emperor had rendered the court of Versailles less anxious to carry on the war in Germany, and to assist her allies in that quarter; while the young Elector of Bavaria had been obliged to make peace with the Queen of Hungary.† In fact, the decease of Charles had put an end to the union of Frankfort; while, on the other hand, the Austrians had concluded a fresh alliance, at Warsaw, with Saxony, England, and Holland. To this Russia afterwards acceded; but was prevented from taking an active part in the war, by the bribery practised upon her principal ministers by the Prussian government. A separate treaty had previously been concluded between Saxony and Austria; by a secret article of which, the different districts of Silesia were divided between the contracting parties. Alarmed at these proceedings, of which he was privately informed by the Count de St. Severin, the French minister at Dresden, Frederic endeavoured to excite his French allies to greater activity. In this, however, he was unsuccessful; which obliged him to turn his thoughts, first to a reconciliation with Austria, and afterwards with England; but he found the ministers of

* Histoire de mon Temps. † Ibid.

both those countries deaf to his entreaties. The Queen of Hungary thought the moment was come to regain Silesia; and it did not suit the politics of the Pelhams, who had just turned out Lord Carteret to make way for themselves, to conclude the war.*

The ill-success of these various negotiations convinced the King of Prussia, as he himself expresses it, "that the Grand Duke of Tuscany was destined to be the new emperor; that the allies would do nothing of advantage in Bavaria; that the French would only be anxious about their projected campaign in Flanders; and that, therefore, their allies would do well to provide for themselves."† Thrown in this way on his own enfeebled resources, Frederic, as usual, rose superior to the difficulties which surrounded him. The celebrated Lord Chesterfield, then minister at the Hague for England, and friendly to the Prussian monarch, had said to Podevils, the Prussian envoy, that the king his master could do nothing by negotiations, unless he, at the same time, resisted vigorously and in action his enemies, who were planning his ruin. Frederic, in the present conjuncture, saw the wisdom of this advice, and, laying aside his diplomacy, he devoted himself exclusively to

* Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

the preparations necessary for the ensuing campaign.*

With this view he reinforced his army by every means in his power; formed great magazines for its support, in different parts of Silesia; and raised, by loan, considerable sums for the necessary expenses of the war; "which sums," he observes, "were obliged to be borrowed, in order that the king might repair, in 1745, the faults he had committed in 1744."† After having thus provided in every way for probable contingencies, he left Berlin on the 15th of March, and proceeded to put himself at the head of his army. He first established himself at Neisse, where his troops suffered considerably by an infectious disorder, which he appears himself to have considered to be the plague, though, from the fear of frightening the soldiers, it was only called a putrid fever.

Previously to the arrival of the King of Prussia in Silesia, the war had recommenced between the light troops of the Austrian army, to whom were united the insurgent inhabitants of the province, (who had been excited to acts of violence by the persuasions of the Austrians,) and the Prussian detachments sent against them. In these skirmishes the Prussians generally had the advantage; of which the most considerable

* Histoire de mon Temps. † Ibid.

was one obtained near Oppeln, by the Colonel Winterfeld and Colonel Goltz, over a considerable body of Hungarian hussars, who were entirely routed, with great slaughter.

Frederic, who was of opinion that the combined army of the Austrians and Saxons, commanded by Prince Charles of Lorraine and the Duke of Saxe Weissenfels, and consisting of 92,000 men, would make its first descent from the mountains of Bohemia, among which it was posted, into Lower Silesia, determined to collect his army in that part of the province. He, therefore, marched his troops, amounting to 50,000 men, into contonments between Jægerndorf, Glatz, and Schweidnitz; and waited for the Austrians, whom he expected to penetrate into Silesia by Landshut. In consequence of this change of place, it became necessary to transport the magazines, which was happily effected, in spite of various attacks from the Austrian light troops.

The departure of the King of Prussia and his army from Upper Silesia, was the signal for fresh irruptions of the enemies. A detachment of them, under the command of the Baron de Bucco, even obtained possession, by treachery, of the fortress of Cosel. At the same time, the General Wallis entered the county of Glatz. From this moment, however, the good fortune of the Prussians seemed to regain its wonted

ascendant. Their first advantage was due to the same Colonel Winterfeld who has already been mentioned, as having defeated a body of Hungarian hussars. This officer was sent to Landshut, to observe the movements of the Austrian army. Here he attacked a detachment, consisting of eight hundred Hungarians, defeated them, and made three hundred prisoners. The next day, Nadasti, the Hungarian general, to revenge the reverse sustained by his countrymen, marched, at the head of 7000 men to Landshut, to attack Winterfeld, who had under his command only 2400. After a combat of four hours, the Hungarian infantry was defeated; and at the moment that Nadasti was preparing to retreat, the event was rendered complete by the arrival of the Prussian general Still, at the head of ten squadrons of cavalry. The Hungarians were pursued to the very frontiers of Bohemia, with great loss. Some of the prisoners related, that the intention of Nadasti was, in case of success, to post himself at Landshut, whither he was to have been followed by the Prince of Lorraine with the rest of the army.* The benefit conferred upon the Prussian cause by this victory of Winterfeld's was thus even greater, than it would at first sight appear to have been, from the small number of combatants engaged.

* Histoire de mon Temps.

Nor were the Prussian arms less successful in Upper Silesia, where the Margrave Charles of Schwedt * had been left with twelve thousand men, to keep in check the parties of Austrian light troops, which infested that part of the country. Expecting as he did daily, to be attacked by the entire Austrian army, Frederic thought it necessary to re-unite the troops of the margrave, with those under his own immediate command. But the hussars and pandours had so completely taken possession of the different passes and roads, that it was with infinite difficulty that the king's order was conveyed to the margrave. The messengers who bore it were some Prussian hussars, who cut their way with their swords through the Hungarian ravaging parties. In the meanwhile, 22,000 troops of various kinds had posted themselves on the heights between Jægerndorf and Neustadt, for the purpose of opposing the march of the margrave. That prince however, undismayed either by the number of his enemies, or by the strength of their positions, attacked them vigorously, cut in pieces the regiments of Ogilvy and Esterhazy, and put the rest to flight. The loss of the Austrians amounted to eight hundred. In this action, which took place on the 22d of May 1745, and which covered with

* The Margraves of Brandenburgh-Schwedt descended from Philip William, one of the sons of the great elector.

glory the margrave and his troops, the Prussian cavalry, who had been created as an effective body by Frederic, particularly distinguished themselves under the command of General Schwerin.*

These advantages on the side of the Prussians were but the preludes of the more considerable ones, which were about to be obtained by them. The Prince of Lorraine at length entered Silesia, and advanced as far as Bolkenhain.† The King of Prussia, on the 1st of June, marched from Schweidnitz, where he was encamped, to meet him. He sent forward the General Du Moulin, with his vanguard, towards Strigau, a manœuvre, which determined the Prince of Lorraine to descend from his position among the mountains into the plain. His intention was to cut off Du Moulin, and his detachment, before the King of Prussia could come to his assistance; and then to advance towards Breslau.

In pursuance of these designs, the prince encamped, on the night of the 3d of June, near Guntersdorf, intending to execute his design the next morning.‡ But at eight o'clock of the same evening, the King of Prussia,

* Histoire de mon Temps.

† Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

‡ Mémoires de Frederic Baron de Trenck.

who was well informed of the motions of his enemies, began his march, and arriving at Strigau at one o'clock on the morning of the 4th, immediately placed his troops in order of battle; regulating the arrangement of them, according to the disposition and number of fires he observed in the Austrian camp. He again sent forward the General Du Moulin at the head of a detachment, and directed him to place himself in ambuscade at the foot of the hill of Spitzberg, the top of which had already been taken possession of, by the Saxon part of the Austrian army, under the command of the Duke of Saxe Weissenfels. At daybreak, Du Moulin came forth from his place of concealment, and attacked the duke, whose troops were driven from their post. Du Moulin, upon this, established his batteries on the Spitzberg, and commenced the battle by a heavy fire of artillery.

Meanwhile, the King of Prussia passed a rivulet, which divided him from the Austrians, ranged his troops with rapidity, and in such a manner, as to make Du Moulin and his detachment occupy the place of the right wing. The rapidity of the Prussian movements disconcerted the Austrians, who, having been deceived by false intelligence of their spies, were completely taken by surprise. So much was this the case, that the Prince of Lorraine, hearing the cannonading between the Saxons and Prussians,

imagined it was the former attacking Strigau, and, in consequence remained entirely inactive, till he was roused from his state of ignorance by the flying troops. The Austrians were besides impeded in forming their line of battle, by the nature of the ground — a marsh preventing them from joining and assisting the Saxons. These latter had rallied after their first confusion, but were obliged by Du Moulin to fly a second time.

The Prussian cavalry, which was stationed on the left wing, attacked that of the Austrians, and, after six consecutive charges, obliged it to give way, and to retire to Hohen-Friedberg. At the same time the infantry of the left wing, commanded by the Prince of Prussia, repulsed that of the enemy. These successes, and the continual advance of the Prussian right wing, which had turned the flank of the Austrians, drove the two wings of the allied army against their centre, which was thus thrown into disorder. The confusion and flight now became general; and the dragoons of Bareith profited by it, to make a desperate charge into the middle of the fugitives, from whom they took two thousand five hundred prisoners, sixty-seven standards, and several cannons. The victorious army continued their pursuit to the foot of the mountains, where they encamped. The loss of the Prussians in the battle of Hohen-Friedberg amounted to two thousand killed and

wounded; that of the Austrians to nine thousand killed and wounded, and an equal number taken prisoners; besides eighty-three standards of different kinds, and seventy-two cannons.*

It was at Hohen-Friedberg that the young Prince Henry of Prussia, the second brother of Frederic, who afterwards so eminently distinguished himself in military commands, first appeared in a field of battle. On the present occasion, he acted as aid-de-camp-general to his royal brother. The Prince of Prussia also distinguished himself upon this memorable day; marching at the head of his brigade into the thickest of the fire. The Marquis de Valori, the French envoy, who was near the king, expressed to him his astonishment at the exposed position, which the prince had chosen. "Ah," replied Frederic, "one cannot be better placed than with such comrades as those he has with him; but it is also necessary, that they should see one is worthy of them."† The King of France had sent M. de La Tour, an officer of merit, to the King of Prussia, to acquaint him with the victory of Fontenoy, gained, on the 11th of May 1745, by the French troops over those of England, Hanover, and Austria. La Tour arrived at the Prussian camp, exactly in time to witness the battle

* Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

† Vie de Frederic II.

which has just been related. The king said to La Tour, before the battle, "So, you are come to see who will retain possession of Silesia." "No, sire," answered the Frenchman, "I only wish to be a witness of the manner, in which your majesty punishes your enemies, and defends your territories."* Frederic sent La Tour back with a letter to Lewis, in which he said, "I have acquitted at Friedberg the letter of exchange you drew upon me at Fontenoy."†

The correspondence of the two monarchs does not, however, appear to have been always carried on in so friendly a tone, as in the letter just cited. Lewis and his ministers seemed to imagine, that successes in Flanders were all that the King of Prussia could expect from them. In consequence, immediately after the victory of Fontenoy, a detachment of 20,000 men was taken from the French army on the Rhine, to reinforce the one in the Low Countries. Frederic seems to have thought that this was done, in consequence of the perfidious suggestions of the Saxon ministers, who had duped the French envoy at the court of Dresden; and had persuaded him, that it would be greatly for the advantage of the King of France, by facilitating

* Vie de Frederic II.

† "J'ai acquitté à Friedberg la lettre de change que vous avez tirée sur moi à Fontenoi."—Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

a peace with the Queen of Hungary, if the French army on the Rhine, commanded by the Prince of Conti, remained inactive; and above all, if it did not in any way oppose the election of the Grand Duke of Tuscany to the imperial dignity.* Whether these suppositions, as to the motives of the conduct of the French government, were true or not, it is difficult to decide; but it is certain that Frederic was of an entirely different opinion from the court of Versailles, as to the services which, as allies, they were bound to render to him.

Finding the ministers of Lewis deaf to his remonstrances, he at length addressed himself directly to that monarch. "He expressed to him his dissatisfaction at the coldness of his ministers; and explained the disagreeable and embarrassing nature of the situation, in which he had been placed, in consequence of his friendship for his christian majesty. He added, that he thought that monarch owed him some return, for having seconded him at a moment when the Austrians were beginning to make some progress in Alsatia. That with regard to the battle of Fontenoy, and the taking of Tournay, they were, undoubtedly, events glorious to the king, and advantageous to France; but that, as far as regarded the interests of Prussia, a battle gained on the banks of the

* Histoire de mon Temps.

Scamander, or the taking of Pekin, would have caused about an equal diversion among the enemies. He also stated, that there were scarcely 6000 Austrians in the army opposed to the French in Flanders; and that in the danger in which he found himself, it was impossible for him to content himself with fair words; but that he was obliged to demand with earnestness something more real and solid. The comparison of the Scamander and Pekin displeased the christian king: his ill-humour was evident in the letter of answer, which he returned to the King of Prussia: and the latter, in his turn, became angry at the tone of haughtiness and coldness, with which that answer was characterized."* This foolish dispute between the two monarchs, which is related in the manner above quoted by Frederic himself, appears to have laid the foundation for the dislike, which they afterwards showed for one another, whenever an opportunity offered. Frederic, according to his ownc onfession, was the original aggressor; and most unwisely so, considering how powerful an ally he thus indisposed towards himself.

The immediate result of the victory of Hohen-Friedberg, was the retreat of Prince Charles of Lorraine into Bohemia; a retreat, which, however, he did not accomplish, without being hotly

* Histoire de mon Temps.

pursued by a portion of the Prussian army, under the command of General Du Moulin.* As soon as they were in their own territories, the Austrians began to collect reinforcements, in which they employed so much diligence, that they were, before the end of June, again ready to take the field: they, however, remained quietly entrenched in the inexpugnable camp of Königsgrätz.†

Early in July, the King of Prussia entered Bohemia, and advanced to Chlum, where he pitched his camp. This movement of Frederic was contrary to the advice of some of his generals, who wished him to carry the war into Saxony, and thus take vengeance upon Augustus the Third for his hostility to Prussia.‡ But Frederic, it would seem, judged wisely in the course he pursued. Had he turned his victorious arms against Saxony, he must have left Silesia, which had just been saved by the battle of Hohen-Friedberg, to the mercy of the Austrians. He had, besides, another object in view, namely, that of so entirely consuming all the means of subsistence along the frontiers of Bohemia, as to render it impossible for the Austrians to winter in that part of the country.§

* Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

† Vie de Frederic II.

‡ Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

§ Histoire de mon Temps.

Meanwhile he despatched the Count of Nassau, with a considerable detachment, into Upper Silesia, which was almost entirely in the possession of the Austrian light troops. Nassau acquitted himself, as usual, like an able general. He obtained possession of Cosel by storm, and took prisoners in it 3000 Croatians; and drove the Hungarians before him into Moravia.

On the 13th of September, Francis grand duke of Tuscany, and husband of Maria Theresa, was elected Emperor of Germany at the diet held at Frankfort. This election was effected by the intrigues of the house of Austria, and the influence of George the Second of England, whose power of subsidizing gave him a complete controul over the electoral college. The King of Prussia, and the elector palatine, protested against the election, but without effect. Francis was a man of confined intellects and sordid habits; but who had at least the good sense to submit, without effort, to the superior mind of his wife. Maria Theresa governed the empire, as she had governed her hereditary kingdoms, leaving to her husband the representation and pageantry belonging to the situation.*

During the residence of Maria Theresa at Frankfort, for the coronation of her husband, Frederic insinuated some propositions of peace

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

to her ministers; but they were received and refused with haughtiness. "The head of the new empress was turned by the restoration, through her means, of the imperial dignity to her family. Thus, entirely occupied with smiling dreams of future greatness, she thought it would be derogatory to her grandeur, if she were to enter into a negotiation, upon a footing of equality, with a prince, whom she considered only as a rebel."* If, indeed, as would appear, the vapours of Austrian pride thus acted upon the mind of Maria Theresa, she deserved to pay the price which she subsequently did, for having indulged in them.

His offers being thus repulsed, Frederic endeavoured to detach some of the members of the coalition, which had been formed against him; an object which was become the more necessary to him, in consequence of the very imperfect assistance he had received, or was likely to receive, from his French allies. With this view he entered into negotiations with George the Second; while, at the same time, knowing that fear was the only hold he could obtain over the court of Dresden, he menaced Saxony with an irruption, by placing a considerable body of troops, under the command of the Prince of Anhalt, in the neighbourhood of Halle. The effect of this latter proceeding

* Histoire de mon Temps.

was, the withdrawal of the greater part of the Saxon troops, commanded by the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels, from the Austrian army. With regard to George the Second, Frederic succeeded in inducing him to sign a convention at Hanover, the basis of which was the peace of Breslau; the articles of which latter, both the contracting sovereigns bound themselves to endeavour to obtain the acceptance of, by the different belligerent powers.*

While these diplomatic proceedings were going on, Frederic remained with his army in Bohemia; sometimes threatening to attack the Prince of Lorraine at Königsgrätz; but really principally intent upon procuring provisions for his army, in which he found considerable difficulty. For about two months the hostile forces continued thus in their respective positions; and nothing occurred, beyond skirmishes between the different foraging parties. At length the Austrians made an attack upon the town of Neustadt, which they were near obtaining possession of; but the timely approach of a body of Prussians, under the command of Du Moulin and Winterfeld, obliged them to retreat.

Soon after this event, the King of Prussia was obliged to abandon his camp at Chlum, in consequence of the want of provisions, and to retire to Staudentz. The detachments he was com-

* Histoire de mon Temps.

pelled to make, in order to protect his convoys coming from Silesia, had by this time reduced his army to 26,000 men. The Austrian force, which had been lately augmented by the junction of 6000 Bavarian troops, amounted to 60,000 men.*

A superiority so great determined the Prince of Lorraine to attack the king, whose intention he imagined was to escape from him. He therefore, on the 29th of September, quitted his camp, and advanced towards Konigshof. The next morning† the prince found himself close to the right wing of the Prussian army, which was still encamped. The Prussian camp was meanwhile surrounded with hordes of Austrian light troops; and, in addition to this inconvenience, Frederic was obliged to form his troops in order of battle, under the fire of the enemy's cannon.‡ The action was commenced by the cavalry of the Prussian right wing, which charged the Austrian cavalry with such impetuosity, as to throw them immediately into confusion. Nor were the Austrian infantry in the centre, though defended by artillery, more fortunate in their collision with the Prussians. After three consecutive attacks, the latter succeeded in driving the former from the height

* Histoire de mon Temps.

† September the 30th.

‡ Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

they occupied. In vain the Austrians rallied upon a second height, and then upon a third; they were driven from each in succession, and obliged to fly. The cavalry of the Austrian left wing being thrown into confusion, and prevented by a wood from reforming themselves, the King of Prussia took advantage of this circumstance, to withdraw part of the cavalry of his right wing, and to send it to reinforce his left. Here again the Prussians put to flight their enemies: and thus, the rout becoming general, the whole Austrian forces retreated, and were pursued by the victors; who took up their last position at the village of Soor, which gave its name to the battle.*

The commanders of the Austrian light troops, Nadasti, Desoffi, Trenck, and Franquini, had received orders to create a diversion by attacking the Prussian camp, and, through the camp, their army behind. They attacked the camp, which was only defended by a slight detachment, commanded by General Schlicting, and obtained possession of it; but here their habits of pillage arrested them. Instead of falling upon the rear of the army, they occupied themselves in ransacking the tents and baggage; and thus assured to Frederic a victory, which was cheaply bought with the loss of a few camp equipages.

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

It was, however, thought by some, that Schlicting had been less vigilant than he ought to have been in the defence of the camp; but, when he was reproached with this, he replied indignantly, "How can one think about baggage, when it is a question of a battle to be fought, and honour to be gained!" * Frederic, indeed, appears to have been of his general's opinion; for, after having related, in his account of this battle, that all his own camp equipage † was taken, and even the persons of his secretaries, he adds, "It is impossible to regard such trifles, when the mind is occupied with those great objects of interest, which obliterate all others, namely, the glory and the salvation of the state." ‡ Frederic is also said to have remarked upon the field of battle, when told that Trenck and his followers were pillaging the camp; "So much the better: they will not, then, interrupt us." §

Trenck was afterwards, as his cousin informs us in his Memoirs, accused at Vienna of having taken the King of Prussia in his bed in the camp, and then allowed him, for a sum of

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Among the baggage of the King of Prussia, which fell into the hands of the enemy upon the present occasion, was his favourite Italian greyhound, "Biche," whose name has thus been preserved in the pages of history.

‡ Histoire de mon Temps.

§ Mémoires de Frederic Baron de Trenck.

money, to make his escape. This accusation appears to have been entirely false. It was principally supported by the testimony of a woman of bad character, of the town of Brunn, who called herself a daughter of Marshal Schwerin; and who swore that she was in bed with the king, when he was taken. This woman is said to have been suborned by the enemies of Trenck, who were bent upon his ruin. In this they were unfortunately too successful, as he was condemned to be imprisoned for life; and died in confinement in 1749.*

The General Lehwald, who had been posted at the head of a detached corps, near Tratenau, hearing the noise of the cannon, hastened to the spot; but the victory was already completed. He only arrived in time to save some of the baggage, and to put a stop to the cruelties, which the pandours and hussars were exercising upon the sick persons and the women, whom they found in the camp. The king, upon his return to his camp, could not even procure a pen and ink; and he was obliged to write to his minister at Breslau these few words with a pencil, "I have beaten the Austrians. I have taken some prisoners. Let the Te Deum be performed. Federic."†

* Mémoirs de Frederic Baron de Trenck.

† Vie de Frederic II.

Frederic allowed that he had committed a fault in weakening his army, by sending detachments in various directions, previous to the battle of Soor. In one of his instructions to his generals, he says, "I deserved to have been beaten; and I should have been so, but for the skill of my generals, and the courage of my troops." * But while we thus admire the modesty of Frederic, and allow the various merits of those under him, we must not forget the consummate ability of the chief; the master eye and hand, which, in the midst of difficulties, arising from infinite inferiority of forces, and from having been in a great measure taken by surprise, were yet able to snatch the victory from an army, already elated with, what they considered, the certainty of success.

The loss of the Prussians in the battle of Soor was 5600 killed and wounded: of the Austrians 6700; besides 3300 prisoners, twenty-one cannons, and twenty-two standards. †

The Austrian army, after their defeat, retired to Jaromirs. The Prussians continued for five days encamped at Soor, and then prepared to return into Silesia. "Posterity," observes the royal historian of his own campaigns, "will be perhaps surprised that an army, victorious in two pitched battles, should retire before the

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

defeated army, without having gained any fruit from its triumphs. The mountains which surround Bohemia; the narrow and dangerous passes which separate it from Silesia; the difficulty of feeding the forces; the superiority of the enemy in light troops; and finally the diminution of the army, — such are the solutions of the problem."* In consequence of these disadvantages, the Prussian army commenced its march towards Silesia on the 16th of October. The light troops of Nadasti and Franquini pursued and harassed it. The consequence was, several skirmishes, with various success. At length the Prussians arrived at their quarters between Ronstock and Schweidnitz; and the King of Prussia, hearing shortly afterwards, that the Prince of Lorraine had separated his army into three corps, which he imagined was for the convenience of putting them into winter quarters, left his own troops under the command of Prince Leopold of Anhalt Dessau, and returned to Berlin. Here his presence was much wanted, to carry on the negotiations, to which the convention of Hanover had given rise.

Having thus given an account of the summer campaign of the King of Prussia, it becomes necessary to cast a cursory glance over what had been done by his allies in other parts of Europe. In Italy, the campaign commenced under fa-

* Histoire de mon Temps.

vourable auspices, for the combined armies of France, Spain, and Naples. In the south, the Spanish general, Count De Gages, obtained several advantages. In the north, the Marshal de Maillebois and the infant Don Philip penetrated into the territories of the King of Sardinia, by the way of Genoa, which republic declared in their favour. Having successfully joined the Spanish and Neapolitan army, under the command of De Gages, which had arrived in Piedmont, they gave battle to the Austrians and Sardinians, under the command of the Count Schulembourgh and Charles Emmanuel king of Sardinia, near Bassignano.* The French and Spaniards were victorious; and the consequence of their success was, the submission of the towns of Casal, Asti, Lodi, and, lastly, Milan. At the conclusion of the campaign, the Spaniards were masters of almost the whole of Lombardy and of Piedmont, owing principally to the talent and activity of the Spanish general De Gages.†

Nor were the allies of Frederic less fortunate, during the year 1745, in Flanders, than in the south of Europe.‡ The glorious victory of Fontenoy, at which Lewis the Fifteenth, and his son the dauphin, both assisted in person, occasioned the fall of Tournay: and a successful skirmish

* Histoire de mon Temps.
† Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.
‡ Histoire de mon Temps.

of a detachment of the French army, against the English at Melle, was followed by the taking of the city of Ghent, which was obtained possession of by surprise. Dendermonde and Ostende also fell into the hands of the French: and Lewis returned to Paris, in September, covered with the laurels, which had been gained for him by the Marshal de Saxe.*

On the Main, the French army, under the command of the Prince of Conti, was prevented from achieving any thing, in consequence of its having been so enfeebled by the detachments, sent from it to reinforce the French forces in Flanders. On the approach of the Count de Traun, with the imperial troops, Conti was obliged to retreat. So much was he afraid of the pursuit of the Austrains, that he destroyed the bridges of Achaffenbourg and Hoechst, and retired to the Rhine. Traun passed the Main; and Bœrenklau, one of his officers, defeated a detachment of the French, near Oppenheim. The Prince of Conti, still more alarmed, passed the Rhine at Germersheim and Rheinturkheim, and encamped near Worms. From thence he retired to Mauderstadt. In the retreat his baggage was taken, and his troops were much harassed: and thus concluded the unsuccessful campaign of the French in the west of Germany.†

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

CHAPTER V.

PRUSSIAN NEGOTIATIONS. — THE GRAND SEIGNIOR ATTEMPTS TO MEDIATE BETWEEN THE CONTENDING PARTIES. — FREDERIC RESOLVES UPON A WINTER CAMPAIGN: — HE SURPRISES AND DEFEATS THE SAXONS: — HE TAKES GOERLITZ. — RETREAT OF THE AUSTRIANS. — BATTLE OF KESSELSDORF. — FREDERIC JOINS THE PRINCE OF ANHALT, AND TAKES DRESDEN: — HE OFFERS PEACE TO THE SAXONS AND AUSTRIANS. — DETAIL OF NEGOTIATIONS. — FREDERIC'S RECEPTION AT BERLIN: — HIS REFLECTIONS ON THE CONCLUSION OF THE WAR.

It is remarked by Frederic himself, that had the negotiations of the Prussians, during the year 1745, been as successful as their arms, they might have spared themselves, as well as their enemies, a great unnecessary effusion of blood.* Various circumstances, however, concurred, to prevent the pacification of Europe at the present moment. Of these, one of the principal was, the invasion of Scotland by the unfortunate Charles Edward Stuart, better known by the name of the young Pretender. This took place immediately after the signing of the convention of Hanover by George the Second; and the results of it so completely occupied both that

* Histoire de mon Temps.

monarch and his ministers, as to prevent their taking that active part in the pending negotiations, which was necessary for their success. It also obliged the King of England to withdraw his troops from Flanders; and thus to open a field for the subsequent advantages, gained by the French in that country. While the Queen of Hungary, no longer trammelled by the pacific counsels of her British ally, was enabled to turn her thoughts and endeavours towards making a last effort against the King of Prussia. The latter sovereign was also in a peculiarly awkward situation: the convention of Hanover was beginning to be suspected; and, if once thoroughly known, would most probably have deprived him of the assistance of France, the only ally that now remained to him.

In vain did a new mediator, in the person of the Grand Seignior, Mahomet the Fifth, appear upon the scene, to the astonishment of the rest of Europe; and offer, through the grand vizier, his good offices towards the obtaining of a universal peace. "The Treasure of God, and Model of the Majesty of Alexander the Great," as he styled himself in his address to the different European sovereigns, gained nothing by his praiseworthy attempts; except the remark of the Abbé de Ville, French minister at the Hague, who observed to the pensionary Fagel, "We must at least allow that the Turk shows

the sentiments of a true christian."—"Yes," replied Fagel, "and there are also some people, who, wishing to pass for *very christian**, never cease to act like Turks."† Voltaire also observes, in speaking of the sultan's mediation, that it ought to have filled with shame the christian powers; who, having begun the war from interest, continued it from obstinacy, and only concluded it from absolute necessity.‡

During the stay of the King of Prussia at Berlin, and while the question of peace or war seemed still to hang doubtful in the balance, he discovered, through the means of the Swedish minister at the court of Dresden, who was devoted to the Prussian interests, a plan concerted between the empress queen and the Saxon court, for an invasion of the hereditary dominions of Prussia. According to this agreement, the Prince of Lorraine was to march into Saxony, where he was to be joined by the Saxon army; and they were then together to advance, during the winter, to Berlin. It was thought that this attack, taking Frederic as it would unprepared, could never be resisted. So sure, indeed, were the confederates of their success, that they had already divided and appropriated

* It must be remembered, that the title of the King of France is, *Le Roi tres Chretien.*

† Vie de Frederic II.

‡ Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

those portions of the Prussian states, which suited them. According to this division, the Austrians were to regain Silesia; and the King of Poland's share was to consist of the bishoprics of Magdebourg and Halberstadt, together with the town of Halle and its territory.*

This discovery obliged the Prussian monarch to lay aside his hopes of peace, and to prepare for a winter campaign: to raise pecuniary resources for which, (all those he possessed having been already expended,) was not one of his smallest difficulties. Another arose from the message he had received from the Russian government, that that court would be obliged, according to its treaty of alliance, to send troops to the assistance of the King of Poland, in case his territories were invaded by the Prussian army. Nothing daunted, however, by the dangerous position in which his affairs were placed, Frederic supplied, by activity, ability, and firmness, the place of those resources, which were wanting to his situation. He placed a considerable body of troops, under the command of the Prince of Anhalt, near Halle, to watch and check the Saxons; who were commanded by Count Rutowsky, and amounted to 25,000 men. He commanded, that in case of the enemies advancing to Berlin, the royal family, the archives,

* Histoire de mon Temps.

and the different public offices should be removed to Stettin: and, having taken every precaution which prudence could suggest or foresight dictate, he left his capital on the 14th of November, to take the command of his army in Silesia. "Leaving," as he himself expresses it, "Berlin in consternation; the Saxons full of hope; and all Europe intent upon the event of this winter campaign."*

No sooner had Frederic taken the command of his army, than he proceeded to lead them against the enemy. On the 20th of November, the Austrians, as usual under the command of the Prince of Lorraine, had entered Lusatia by Zittau, and encamped themselves so as to occupy a great extent of country. Here they waited the arrival of a body of troops, under the command of the General Grüne, in order to commence the execution of their plan.† Meanwhile, they remained in complete ignorance of the movements of the Prussian army, which they imagined to be still quietly reposing in its winter quarters. The precautions of Frederic were the cause of this. He had contrived that the three rivers, which were in front of his army, the Queisse, the Neisse, and the Bober, should be guarded by separate detachments of Prussian troops, who permitted all who came from Lu-

* Histoire de mon Temps. † Vie de Frederic II.

satia to pass without difficulty, but allowed no one to return. Thus the King of Prussia obtained intelligence respecting the enemies; while, at the same time, he prevented their receiving any respecting him.*

On the 22d of November, Frederic advanced with the main body of his army to the Queisse; and having thrown four bridges across that river, he passed it on the following morning, in the midst of a thick fog, which prevented the Austrians from discovering his march. The design of the king was to allow the imperialists to pass him, and then to attack their rear, in order to cut off their supplies of provisions; and thus to oblige them either to fight, or to retire with disgrace into Bohemia. The Prussian columns, after having passed the Queisse, were ordered to rendezvous at Naumbourg. The first column of infantry, which was commanded by the king in person, had for its guide a young miller, who led them into a marsh, from which they had great difficulty in extricating themselves. They, however, at length succeeded; and, upon arriving at Naumbourg, received intelligence that the hussars of General Ziethen had fallen upon the Saxon quarters at Hennersdorff. By the movements of the Prussian army it was contrived, that the Saxons should be attacked in

* Histoire de mon Temps.

front, in flank, and in the rear, at one and the same moment. Thus hemmed in, they soon gave way; and the success was complete. In this action the Saxons lost six cannons and five standards; 1100 of their men were taken prisoners; and their baggage was pillaged by the Prussian hussars.*

The victorious army encamped at Hennersdorff for the night, and the next day learned that the Prince of Lorraine had retreated. On the 25th, the king pursued him: but the prince continuing to fly, the former was obliged to give up all hope of bringing him to an engagement, and to content himself with obtaining possession of the town of Goërlitz; where he found the great magazines of provisions destined for the use of the Austrian army, and took a considerable number of prisoners. The Austrians, who feared lest the Prussians should be beforehand with them, and cut off their retreat, now hastened their flight; and, with this view, set fire to their own baggage. They were, notwithstanding, much harassed by the Prussian light troops, who also took a considerable number of prisoners. Finally, after an expedition into Lusatia, which had lasted only one week, they found themselves again in Bohemia; but weakened by the loss of about 5000 men, and deprived of their magazines and their baggage.

* Histoire de mon Temps.

The King of Poland was, with reason, so much alarmed at these successes of the Prussians, that he left Dresden, and retired to Prague; while Frederic wrote to the Prince of Anhalt, "I have struck my stroke in Lusatia; do you strike yours at Leipsic; and I reckon upon meeting you at Dresden." * In pursuance of this advice of his master, the Prince of Anhalt left Halle secretly, on the 28th of November, and, penetrating suddenly into Saxony, drove the General Sibilsky from Skeuditz, and the Count Renard from his intrenchments near Leipsic. On the 30th, he forced the town of Leipsic to capitulate. The same fate attended Eilenburgh on the 1st of December, and Torgau on the 5th. On the 6th of December, the prince with his army were encamped at Torgau.†

The King of Prussia, whose anxiety to join the Prince of Anhalt was great, determined upon entering Saxony by Meissen. With this view he sent forward the general Lehwald, with a corps of troops, to summon the town of Meissen, which was garrisoned by Saxon grenadiers, under the command of General Alenbeck. The latter, who was pressed on one side by Lehwald, and on the other by Anhalt, escaped during

* "J'ai frappé mon coup en Lusace, frappez le votre à Leipsig; et je compte vous revoir à Dresde."

† Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic II.

the night. The Prussian general took possession of the town, and joined the Prince of Anhalt.* Meanwhile, the Prince of Lorraine had marched from Bohemia into Saxony, by Leutmeritz, and was encamped between Pirna and Plauen, with an intention of uniting his army with that of the Saxons, upon the first opportunity. Fearing this junction, the Prince of Anhalt determined, without waiting for the arrival of the King of Prussia, upon attacking the Saxons, whose army, under the command of Count Rutowsky, had lately been joined by a reinforcement of Austrians commanded by General Grüne, and now covered the city of Dresden.†

Rutowsky had entrenched himself in a strong position at Kesselsdorf, and was so confident that the Prussians would not venture to attack him in it, that he refused the offer of the Prince of Lorraine to send him farther reinforcements. He was, however, deceived in his expectations, for, on the morning of the 15th of December, the Prince of Anhalt attacked an advanced post of the Saxons behind Wilsdruf, and obliged the troops composing it to retire to Kesselsdorf.‡ The main body of the Saxons was here drawn up in order of battle, having their Austrian

* Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.
† Histoire de mon Temps. ‡ Ibid.

auxiliaries on their right wing. Their left wing was defended by thirty great cannons, and their centre by fifty: under the fire of all of which, the Prince of Anhalt had to form his line of battle.* Three battalions of grenadiers, and the Prince of Anhalt's own regiment of infantry, attacked the village of Kesselsdorf: twice they obtained possession of it, and twice they were repulsed with great loss. The second time, the Saxon grenadiers, eager in the pursuit, left the village, and were immediately attacked by the dragoons, who forced them to retire to their first post. General Lehwald then attacked them with the right wing of the Prussian infantry, obtained possession of their batteries and of the heights near Kesselsdorf, and thus turned the flank of the Saxon army. He thus threw their whole line into disorder, and contined a tremendous fire, till the Prince Maurice of Anhalt, having passed a deep ravine, and beaten back the right wing of the Saxons, the defeat became general.†

The Saxon army fought well, but were at length obliged to fly towards Dresden. The Austrian reinforcement, under General Grüne, fled with them, having taken no part in the battle. In their retreat, they joined the Austrian

* Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

† Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

army, with whom they marched into Bohemia. The Prince of Lorraine offered Rutowsky to march with him the next day, and again attack the Prussians. But the Saxon general was contented with his beating, and refused to agree to the plan; alleging, as an excuse, that his infantry was almost entirely destroyed, that he had lost 10,000 men, that his soldiers were in want of arms and munitions, and that they had not yet recovered from their panic.* The loss of the Prussians in the battle of Kesselsdorf amounted to 3000 killed and wounded; that of the Saxons to 4500. Five generals, 300 officers, and 5000 men were taken prisoners, with forty-eight cannons, and eight standards.

Viewing the victory of Kesselsdorf in all its bearings, and considering it with reference to the strength of the enemy's position, their numbers, and the inclemencies of the season (the ground being covered with ice), we must allow that it was one of the most remarkable and glorious of those gained by the Prussians, during the wars of the Great Frederic.

On the day of this victory, the King of Prussia had only been able to reach Meissen. He had heard nothing of late from the Prince of Anhalt, and was in the greatest state of anxiety; being convinced that some action had taken place. If

* Histoire de mon Temps.

fortune had not been favourable to Anhalt, he had determined to assemble his army on the heights of Meissen, to join them to the beaten troops, placing the latter in the second line, and then to attack the enemies again, and wrest the victory from them.* The prince, however, spared him the necessity of adopting this desperate course. On the evening of the 15th an officer brought the king the news of the battle; on the 16th his army crossed the Elbe, and on the 18th joined that of the Prince of Anhalt. †

Previously to the battle of Kesselsdorf, Frederic appears to have been dissatisfied with his old general: he complained of his slowness and circumspection; and seems to have thought that Anhalt wished to contrast these qualities with the rashness of a young man, which the king had shown in Lusatia. However this might be, the prince, by this great success, which was his last military exploit, nobly concluded a life which had been passed in the conduct of armies. The Prince Leopold of Anhalt Dessau had lived in camps for fifty years. In 1707, he had been the first person who entered the French lines at the siege of Turin; and he was now,

* Histoire de mon Temps.

† Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

in the winter of his days, considered the most eminent officer for the conduct of infantry in Europe.* The king, when they met, gave the prince those praises, and that meed of thanks, which he had so amply deserved; and the prince showed him the field of battle. "Here," observes Frederic in his account of this war, "even the difficulties that had been encountered, however great, and the number of prisoners that had been taken, however considerable, were less surprising circumstances than the crowds of the inhabitants of Dresden, who covered the whole country, having come out of the town to meet and look at the Prussians."†

The Prussian army, conducted by its monarch, marched, on the very day of its junction with its victorious brethren, to Dresden, and took possession of one of the suburbs. General Bosc, the governor, endeavoured, in vain, to obtain a capitulation: he was obliged to open the gates to the victors, and to surrender himself a prisoner of war, together with 4000 men, who were in the town.‡ It would have been impossible to have defended Dresden upon the present occasion; but Bosc took the opportunity of

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

‡ Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

throwing the blame of the surrender upon the Count Bruhl, the hated minister of his master. Bruhl had demolished some of the fortifications, in order to enlarge the gardens of his hotel, situated on the Elbe.* When, therefore, the Prussians demanded admittance, Bosc said, that he must yield, *for he could not defend a flower garden.*† It was upon this occasion that the King of Prussia visited the house of Bruhl, of which the most remarkable part appears to have been his wardrobe. This consisted, according to an eye-witness at the time, of "sixty swords, eighty canes, 322 snuff-boxes, 528 suits of clothes, 600 pairs of boots, 800 pairs of shoes, and materials of various kinds not made up, enough to clothe three towns."‡ There was one room entirely full of wigs, which caused the king, when he entered it, to remark "What numbers of wigs for a man without a head."§

Upon his arrival in Dresden, Frederic forthwith sent fresh offers of peace to the King of Poland, dated from his capital. He then went to see the family of that sovereign, who had remained in the town, and treated them with the greatest

* Vie de Frederic II.

† "Je ne puis pas me defendre dans un jardin de plaisance."

‡ Dutens, Voyageur qui se repose.

§ "Que de perruques pour un homme sans tête."

kindness and attention.* It had been reported, that the Prince of Anhalt had demanded the pillage of Dresden, as a reward to his army for their fatigues and services at Kesselsdorf. The only answer given to this calumny was, the perfect discipline that was observed by every soldier in the Prussian army at Dresden. Not an inhabitant was insulted; not a theft was committed. The king had all the shops opened; gave a great dinner to the foreign ministers; and commanded an Italian opera after the repast, which he attended in person.† "In short," observes Voltaire, "it was hardly perceptible that the possession of the town had changed hands; and its capture was only signalized by the fêtes that were given in it."‡ The Saxons, accustomed to pleasures, took part readily in those offered to them by the victors; and they even attended the 'Te Deums' which were performed in honour of the successes of the Prussian arms. §

Such was the terror inspired to the mind of Augustus the Third by the taking of Dresden, and so completely were the calculations of his feeble and treacherous minister Count Bruhl

* Voltaire says, "He acted towards them as was to be expected from the most polished man of his age."

† Histoire de mon Temps.—Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

‡ Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

§ Vie de Frederic II.

destroyed by that event, that the Saxon government was forced to make peace, at once, upon the terms offered to them. It was no longer the counsellors of the King of Poland who offered obstacles to the general pacification of Germany; so ready were they to conclude the war without delay, that they sent Mr. Villiers*, the English envoy at the court of Saxony, from Prague, to Frederic, at Dresden, with the fullest powers. The consequence of this conduct was, that the King of Prussia, having entered Dresden on the 18th of December, signed the peace of Dresden with the Saxons and Austrians on the 25th of the same month. The Count de Harrach had arrived there from the empress queen shortly after Mr. Villiers, and was too happy, on the part of his government, to accede to the convention of Hanover.† For it is observable, that so great was the moderation of the King of Prussia, that his stipulations continued unvaried, even after the victorious day of Kesselsdorf, and the possession of Dresden. By this peace Silesia and the county of Glatz were again assured to the King of Prussia.‡ The King of Poland also

* Thomas Villiers, a younger son of William second Earl of Jersey, a negotiator of small abilities. He was afterwards created Lord Hyde of Hindon, and Earl of Clarendon.

† Histoire de mon Temps,

‡ Müller, Tableau des Guerres de Frederic le Grand.

agreed to give up to him, for an equivalent, the town of Furstemberg on the Oder, and the passage of Schildo; and to pay to him a million of crowns.*

The negotiations, in which Mr. Villiers had acted as mediator, had been going on for a month; but the bad faith of the Saxons had prevented their advancing towards a conclusion. Nothing but the brilliant successes of the Prussians would ever have put an end to these intrigues. The long correspondence between the King of Prussia, his minister Podevils, the Saxon ministers, and Villiers, exhibits a good specimen of diplomatic chicanery; but of the letters composing it none are worth quoting, with the exception of the last, being the one written by Frederic to Villiers, the day he obtained possession of Dresden. It is dated

"Sir, Dresden, 18th December 1745.

"I was much surprised to receive propositions for peace on a day of battle†; and I have been sufficiently convinced of the little sincerity of the Saxon ministers, by the return of Prince Charles of Lorraine into Saxony. Fortune, which has seconded my cause, has put me in a condition to notice these proceedings in the way

* Grimoard, Tableau de la Vie et du Regne de Frederic le Grand.

† Kesselsdorf.

they deserve; but, far from having such intentions, I again offer, for the last time, my friendship to the King of Poland. My successes do not blind me: and though I might, with reason, be proud of my situation, I am always in the same sentiments of preferring peace to war. I am waiting for M. de Bulow and M. de Rex* to have their full powers, in order that the Count de Podevils, who will arrive here either this evening or to-morrow, may enter immediately into negotiations with them. I cannot, however, conceal my surprise, that an English minister could ever advise me to depart from a treaty, which I have made with the king his master, and which Great Britain has guaranteed. You will sooner see me perish, with my whole army, than yield the least particle of that treaty.

"If, therefore, the Queen of Hungary chooses once for all to make peace, I am willing to sign one, in conformity with the convention of Hanover: if she refuses this offer, I shall consider myself justified in increasing my demands. Bring me, therefore, the last determinations of the King of Poland, and let me know at once, if he prefers the total ruin of his country to its preservation, and sentiments of hostility to those of friendship: in a word, if he had rather relight the deadly flames of war, instead of re-establishing

* The Saxon plenipotentiaries.

peace with his neighbours, and tranquillizing Germany. I remain, with all possible esteem, &c. &c. &c.

" FEDERIC." *

While the war was thus drawing to a close, Frederic received the following letter from Lewis the Fifteenth, in answer to a forcible appeal for farther assistance, which he had written to him, in the midst of his late perils and difficulties, from Berlin. With the King of Prussia's usual good fortune, this letter, which was certainly not intended by the writer of it to do him service, arrived just in time to enable that monarch to break off his relations with France, of which he had no further need; and at the same time to throw the blame of so doing upon the government of that country.

" Sir, and my Brother,

" Your majesty, in your letter of the 15th of November, confirms to me what I already knew respecting the convention of Hanover of the 26th of August. I cannot help being astonished that a treaty should have been negotiated, concluded, signed, and ratified with a sovereign, who is my enemy, without my receiving the slightest notice of it. I am not surprised at your

* Vie de Frederic II.

refusal to lend yourself to violent measures, and to a direct and formal engagement against me: my enemies ought to know your majesty better. I consider it a fresh injury to myself, that they should have dared to make to you such unworthy propositions. I counted upon your creating a diversion. I have made two powerful ones myself in Flanders and Italy; while I occupied on the Rhine the attention of the Queen of Hungary's largest army. The expenses I have gone into, and the efforts I have made, have been rewarded by the greatest successes. The effects of these have, however, been much endangered by the treaty, which your majesty has concluded without my privity. If the Queen of Hungary had agreed to that treaty, all her army in Bohemia would have been suddenly turned against me. These are not the ways, in which peace can really be made. I do not, however, on this account, feel the less dread at the perils and dangers, which you are now in the midst of. Nothing can equal my impatience to hear of your safety; and the assurance of your security and tranquillity will cause mine. Your majesty has great forces under your command; you are the terror of your enemies, over whom you have gained considerable and glorious advantages; joined to which, the winter, which suspends all military operations, will aid you to defend yourself. Who is

more capable than your majesty to afford good counsels to yourself. You have only to follow what shall be suggested to you by your talent, your experience, and, above all, your sense of honour. With regard to assistance from me, which can only consist in subsidies and diversions, I have given all that was possible; and I will continue to do so in the ways the most likely to ensure success. I am reinforcing my troops. I neglect nothing; but I am hastening whatever preparations may enable me to act, in the ensuing campaign, with the greatest vigour. If your majesty has any projects in view capable of favouring my enterprises, I intreat you to communicate them to me, as I shall always have great pleasure in acting in concert with you." *

The commentary of Frederic upon this letter of his brother of France, which he gives in his History of the War, is amusing. "This letter, at first sight," says he, "appears amiable and civil; but when one considers the critical position in which the King of Prussia then was, as well as the preceding negotiations which had taken place between him and the court of France, one cannot help remarking in it a tone of irony, which was the more misplaced, because it was undoubtedly never intended to fulfil the reci-

* Histoire de mon Temps.

procal engagements contracted by the treaty of Versailles, by means of epigrams. Let us strip this letter of its phrases, and examine what it really says. I am very sorry that you have concluded the treaty of Hanover without telling me; for, if the Queen of Hungary had accepted it, the Prince of Lorraine would have returned into Alsatia. Do not you perceive that the war in Italy and Flanders is a diversion I make in your favour? For you cannot suppose that I have any interest in the conquest of Flanders: and as for the establishment of my son-in-law * Don Philip in Italy, I do not care about it. Conti knows so well how to keep in check the principal forces of the Queen of Hungary in Germany, that he has retreated across the Rhine, and let them make whom they would emperor; while Traun was enabled to send Grüne into Saxony; and, indeed, might have followed him with the rest of his army, if the Queen of Hungary had thought proper to employ it against you. I have done great things this campaign. Your actions have also been talked of. I am sorry for the dangerous situation, in which you have placed yourself for my sake; but then the only way of acquiring glory is by sacrificing oneself for France. Show firm-

* The Infant Philip, Duke of Parma and Placentia, a younger son of Philip the Fifth, King of Spain, married, in 1738, Louisa Elizabeth, daughter of Lewis the Fifteenth.

ness and fortitude therefore in your suffering; and imitate the example of my other allies, whom I abandoned it is true, but to whom I give charity, when they have been stripped of all their possessions. Take counsel of your own talent, and of that presumption which has led you sometimes to venture to offer me advice. You will doubtless have ability sufficient to extricate yourself from your difficulties; and besides the cold of winter will render your enemies torpid, and prevent their fighting you. If, however, any misfortune should happen to you, I promise you that the French academy shall make a funeral oration over your kingdom, which your enemies have destroyed. Your name also shall be placed in the martyrology of those enthusiasts, who have ruined themselves in the service of France, and whom she has condescended to abandon. You see I have already made diversions; and have offered you a subsidy of a million of livres. You must have great hopes in the beautiful campaign I mean to make next summer, and for which I am already making preparations: and be assured that I will act in concert with you on all the subjects, in which you will blindly follow my wishes, and conform yourself in every thing to what is favourable to my interests."

It is evident that Frederic was much galled by the ironical epistle of Lewis; and it must

therefore have been particularly gratifying to him that the prosperous state of his affairs, enabled him to reply to the French monarch in the following manner: —

" Sir, and my Brother,

" After the letter which I wrote to your majesty on the 15th of November, I had, I think, a right to expect from you some real assistance. I will not now enter into a consideration of the reasons you may have, for abandoning your allies to the caprices of fortune. Upon the present occasion, the valour of my troops has delivered me from the dangerous position, in which I was placed. If the number of my enemies had overwhelmed me, your majesty would, apparently, have been contented with pitying me; and I should have been without resources. How can an alliance subsist, unless the contracting powers concur with an equal ardour for their common preservation? Your majesty tells me to take counsel of myself; and I shall do so, as you think it fitting. Reason tells me to end as speedily as I can a war, which has no longer any object, since the Austrian troops are no longer in Alsatia, and the emperor is no more. Under these circumstances, any future battles that might be fought, would be only a useless effusion of blood. Reason also advises me to think of my own security; and to

reflect upon the great Russian armament, which threatens my kingdom on the side of Courland; and on the army, which M. de Traun commands on the Rhine, and which might easily march towards Saxony: and also to consider the inconstancy of fortune, and that, in the circumstances in which I find myself, I must not expect any assistance from my allies. The Austrians and the Saxons have just sent ministers here, to negotiate a peace. I have therefore no other part left than to sign it. After having thus acquitted myself of the duty I owe to the state I govern, and to my own family, no object will be more anxiously sought by me, than to make myself useful to the interests of your majesty. I should be indeed truly happy, if I could be the instrument of the general pacification of Europe. Your majesty could not entrust your wishes to any one, who is more attached to you than myself, or who would labour with more earnestness to re-establish concord and good intelligence between the different states, whom these long disputes have rendered enemies. I entreat you to continue your friendship to me, which will always be precious to me; and to be persuaded that I am, &c. &c."

If this bitter answer was not a sufficient revenge to Frederic, for the manner in which he thought he had been treated by the court of

France, he had the additional pleasure of leaving the whole burthen of the war upon that power; and thus also giving employment to those, who might otherwise have been inclined to have renewed the contest with himself. It appears indeed, after the peace of Dresden, to have been the distinct intention of Maria Theresa to obtain, by means of advantages gained over France, a compensation for the territories which had been wrested from her by the Prussian monarch.*

Thus concluded a war of considerable duration; attended with much human suffering, and great loss of life; but marked with no important consequences. "Considering, therefore, things at their true value, we are obliged to acknowledge, that this contest was, in every respect, only a useless effusion of blood; and that the continued victories of the Prussians only helped to confirm to them the possession of Silesia. In a word, if consideration and reputation in arms merit, that efforts should be made to obtain them, undoubtedly Prussia, by gaining them, was recompensed for having undertaken the war; but this was all she gained by it; and even this imaginary advantage excited feelings of envy against her." †

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

† Histoire de mon Temps.

The peace of Dresden being signed and ratified, Frederic commenced the evacuation of Saxony on the 1st of January 1746, and returned to his own capital. Here he was received with arches of triumph, and with the appellation of *Frederic the Great*, which has ever since remained to him. This epithet, sought by so many, and obtained by so few, was undoubtedly due to him for his military exploits; but the philosopher and the historian have a still greater pleasure in bestowing it upon him, for those eminent merits as a legislator and a sovereign, which the long course of tranquillity he was now about to enjoy, gave him an opportunity of displaying in their fullest lustre.*

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

BOOK THE THIRD.

1746 — 1756.

FROM THE PEACE OF DRESDEN TO THE COMMENCEMENT OF THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR.

CHAPTER I.

VOLTAIRE'S COMPARISON OF FREDERIC WITH CHARLES THE TWELFTH. — FREDERIC'S "HISTORY OF HIS OWN TIME."— HE REPAIRS HIS LOSSES CAUSED BY THE WAR. — REFORM OF THE LAWS. — CASE OF THE MILLER ARNOLD. — DANGEROUS ILLNESS OF THE KING. — FIELD MARSHAL KEITH AND LORD MARISCHAL. — EFFECTS OF THE PEACE OF AIX-LA-CHAPELLE. — WARLIKE ATTITUDE OF THE COURTS OF RUSSIA AND AUSTRIA. — PLANS FOR THE AMELIORATION OF THE DIFFERENT BRANCHES OF THE PRUSSIAN GOVERNMENT. — PECUNIARY RESOURCES OF PRUSSIA. — COLONIES ESTABLISHED BY FREDERIC: — HE ABOLISHES THE SERVITUDE OF THE PEASANTS: — HIS CHOICE OF THE MINISTERS OF RELIGION.

An eminent writer of the last century, whose works have been already quoted upon several occasions, observes, with justice, how much more a remarkable man Frederic was, than Charles the Twelfth; because, being equally fortunate with that sovereign in his wars and in his treaties, he also, as soon as the latter were con-

cluded, applied himself, with equal success, to the improvement of his territories, and the encouragement of the arts. That he passed at once, and apparently without difficulty, from the tumult of war to a retired and philosophical life; and gave himself up to the studies of poetry, eloquence, and history; without, however, omitting any of the duties of a sovereign. He adds, that Frederic never regarded Charles as a great man, because he was only a hero! *

"I have not entered," continues the same writer, in his History of the Age of Lewis the Fifteenth, "into any detail of the victories of the King of Prussia: he has himself given a relation of them. *It belonged to Cæsar alone to write his Commentaries.*" No sooner, indeed, had the peace of Dresden afforded any leisure to Frederic, than he commenced his account of the two wars against the house of Austria, which had occupied the first years of his reign. This he entitled "The History of my own Time." Of this work, which has been often referred to in the preceding pages, he gives the following account himself, in a letter written to Voltaire.† "The work, which at present occupies me, is not in the way of memoirs nor commentaries: my own history hardly enters into my

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

† Supplement aux Œuvres posthumes de Frederic II.

plan; for I consider it a folly in any one, to think himself sufficiently remarkable, to render it necessary, that the whole universe should be informed of the details relating to him. I describe generally the disturbed state of Europe; and I have particularly endeavoured to expose the *ridicules* and the contradictions, which may be remarked in those who govern it. I have given a precis of the most important negotiations, and the most remarkable warlike operations; and I have at the same time interspersed these relations, with reflections upon the causes of events, and on the different effects which the same thing produces, at different times and in different nations." *

In another letter, written about the same time, he says, "I am at present buried in history: I study it; I write it; and I find myself more curious to be well acquainted with that of others, than to know the end of my own." † Nor is the modesty put forward by Frederic, when speaking of himself in these letters, a mere profession. Those who take the trouble of looking into his History of his own Time, will find that he is full as ready to enumerate and to blame his own faults. as those of others; while the relation, which he cannot

* Letter to Voltaire of the 22d of February 1747.

† Letter to Voltaire of the 24th of April 1747.

omit, of his own great actions, is couched in very simple language, and written with the most modest brevity. Frederic, undoubtedly, could afford to be modest, when speaking of his military achievements; but this circumstance by no means diminishes his merit in being so.

The first care, however, of the King of Prussia, when he found himself at peace, was to restore the losses he had sustained in his army; for he was well aware, that to preserve tranquillity, it is necessary to be always in a condition to resist oppression. He found great facilities in recompleting his regiments, from the numbers of Austrian and Saxon prisoners he had taken, most of whom enrolled themselves under his banners. The peace of Dresden gave rise to many separate negotiations, of which one of the most important to Prussia, was that commenced, for the purpose of obtaining the guarantee of the empire to the conditions of that treaty. Maria Theresa objected to the guarantee, unless it were accompanied, at the same time, with one in favour of the Pragmatic Sanction. Finally, the guarantee was not given by the diet of the empire, till the year 1751; though the principal sovereigns of Europe, who concurred in the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, had, upon that occasion, given to the Prussian monarch respectively the guarantee he required.*

* Histoire de mon Temps.

The year 1747 was rendered remarkable in the Prussian annals, by the commencement of the reform of the laws, and of the administration of justice, in the Prussian states. The ancient edicts, which were in force in these territories, were a barbarous mixture of the Roman and the Saxon laws, which were difficult to administer, and even to understand; while they were, at the same time, favourable to every species of vexatious delay.* Frederic determined as he himself expresses it, "to destroy the hydra of chicanery."† The two first wars of Silesia had occupied him so much, that he had been obliged to suspend this undertaking; but as soon as they were concluded, he returned to the prosecution of it, and continued to keep it in view during the whole of his long reign. In the commencement of this great work, he was fortunate in having, as his chancellor, the Baron Cocceji, a man of integrity and ability, and who had already distinguished himself in his attempts to ameliorate the laws of Prussia. Cocceji had been originally a professor in the university, which existed at Frankfort on the Oder. He afterwards filled different offices during the reign of Frederic William, and, among others, that of president of the chamber of justice at

* Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.

† Vie de Frederic II.

Berlin.* While occupying this post, he proposed certain reforms in the manner of administering justice; but Plotho, the minister of justice, who was jealous of him, prevented their taking effect. On the death of Plotho, Cocceji succeeded him; and forthwith drew up a general plan, with a view to the same object, which he presented to the king. Frederic William, however, referred it to some of his other lawyers, who, like most members of the same profession in all countries, being strongly prejudiced in favour of the legal errors and forms and technicalities, in which they had been brought up, made an unfavourable report of Cocceji's plan, and it was, consequently, not put into execution.†

In 1747, Cocceji was made great chancellor, and, under the auspices of a more enlightened sovereign, again commenced his task. He still, it is true, found difficulties in executing his reform; but supported by the monarch, and assisted by Jarriges, who afterwards succeeded him as chancellor, and by other able lawyers, he succeeded in compiling a body of laws, which was entitled the *Code Frederic*.‡ The most strenuous opponent of these novelties and changes was Arnim, the minister of justice: and

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Mirabeau, de la Monarchie Prussienne.

‡ In Latin, "Corpus Juris Fredericianum."

those lawyers who took his view of the subject were, therefore, called Arnimians; while the followers of the chancellor were designated by the name of Coccejians.* This contest, which ought, from the gravity of its subject, to have been kept within the bounds of reason and moderation, soon degenerated into all the bitterness of party. Arnim resigned his situation; and Cocceji, using without mercy his power as a conqueror, had all his followers, who held legal places, turned out.†

The merits, and they are immense ones, of the *Code Frederic* as compared with the barbarick and confused laws which preceded it, were; first, the reducing the whole body of the jurisprudence of the country to one system, agreeing in all its parts; and, secondly, the getting rid of the delays and vexatious impediments to justice, which previously existed. Undoubtedly, the new code had also many faults; among which, those that have been the most frequently reproached to it, are, the obscurity of some of its enactments, and the want of a lucid and clear order in its various provisions. But Frederic was too wise to expect perfection in any work of man; and he was, besides, well aware that a general code of laws can only be rendered as perfect as

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† Vie de Frederic II.

possible by degrees; by finding out its defects in practice, and by remedying them when found out. He, therefore, at once put Cocceji's code into action. It was subsequently much modified by succeeding chancellors; till at last, towards the end of the reign of Frederic, in 1781, M. de Crammer, the then chancellor, almost entirely remodelled it; and gave to Prussia the body of laws, which is still acted upon in that country.*

At the same time that the new code was promulgated, great reforms were also made in the power and constitution of the different tribunals, which led to very beneficial effects, by purifying the source of justice. So anxious was Frederic, indeed, that impartial justice should be done to all, that he was accustomed to say, when giving instructions to his judges upon their appointment, "If a suit arises between me and one of my subjects, and that the case is a doubtful one, you should always decide against me." †

Many years after the establishment of the Code Frederic, and the reform of the tribunals, Frederic received an answer from a miller, which was the strongest illustration he could possibly hope for, of the confidence of the country in the

* Mirabeau, de la Monarchie Prussienne.

† Vie de Frederic II.

laws, and the administration of them. When the King of Prussia had determined to build, what is called the new palace of Sans Souci, part of his plan was to connect the new building with the old Sans Souci by a pleasure ground, which, in fact, exists. A mill occupied part of the ground, which he wished to include in his new garden. He offered to buy it, and to pay for it considerably more than the value. The miller refused to part with it; and declared, that he would never leave the mill, which had descended to him from his forefathers. The king himself, in one of his walks, conversed with the miller upon the subject. Becoming at length irritated at the man's obstinacy, he said to him, "You seem not to be aware that I am the master, and that I can take by force what you refuse to give up to me."—"Oh," replied the miller, "You cannot frighten me in this way; we have judges at Berlin!" Frederic was so pleased with the answer, that he immediately abandoned his plan, and formed his gardens so as not to interfere with the patrimony of the miller.*

One of the points of reform the most insisted upon by the Chancellor Cocceji to Frederic was, that no appeal to Frederic himself from the tribunals should be permitted. The inconve-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

niences of this appeal to the sovereign, who was generally ignorant of the circumstances of the case appealed upon, were manifold. Already, in 1743, the department of justice had memorialized the king upon the disadvantages of this appeal, which they represented, and with reason, as adding greatly to the length of the suits, to the detention of the prisoners, and to the expenses of the causes. Frederic had then refused to accede to their recommendation, alleging, as his reason, that if he consented to it, " the judges would be able to oppress the poor people of the provinces as much as they liked." * At the time of the chancellor Cocceji's reform, he at length agreed to the abolition of the appeal, which renunciation on his part did not, however, long continue in force. The anxiety of Frederic to do every thing by himself, soon caused him to take a part in the petitions and memorials, which were sent to him against the decisions of the different judges. In doing this, he was undoubtedly actuated by the best of motives, namely, that of obtaining impartial justice for his people; but the results of his conduct were not on that account the less injurious, both to the tribunals and to the suitors. His arbitrary manner of dealing with the sentences pronounced by the courts, decried those who sat

* Vie de Frederic II.

upon the judgment seat in the eyes of the country; and the impossibility, on the part of the king, to obtain a fair view of the subject under discussion, occasioned his frequently committing actual injustice.

In criminal sentences, Frederic was always against inflicting severe punishments; and his objection to putting to death even the greatest criminals, which continued during his whole life, does infinite honour to his humanity. This forbearance to shed blood did not, however, extend to the laws which regulated the military. The Prussian discipline was of the strictest and harshest kind; and symptoms of insubordination were generally punished with a disproportioned rigour. The barbarity of these military punishments, at which humanity shudders, would appear, at first sight, to be quite incompatible with the compassionate intentions usually shown by Frederic towards criminals; but the exaggerated notions of discipline, in which he had been brought up, appear, upon all points connected with the army, to have extinguished entirely the better feelings of his nature. Perhaps (though it is not mentioned as an excuse) his conviction, that the existence of Prussia depended upon her army, added to his extreme severity for military faults and crimes. Something must also be conceded to the natural inconsistency of human nature, increased by the possession of absolute

sovereignty; which may have led him, though generally merciful, to be sometimes unreasonably severe.

It is certain, however, that few despotic sovereigns (and no sovereignty was ever more despotic than that of Prussia in the days of Frederic, for his word was law in every branch and every department of government, and over every subject of his kingdom,) have ever been more careful than he was, to prevent injustice or oppression, or more anxious to mitigate, as much as he was able, criminal punishments. On the memorials also, which were sent him against the decision of the judges in civil suits, he usually wrote, when he sent them back to be reheard, such phrases as these: "Do not be so harsh upon the poor;" "I do not choose that the lower orders should be oppressed;" "I will not allow my subjects to be tyrannised over;" &c. Upon one occasion, the Chancellor Fürst proved to the king the injustice of a complaint made by a peasant, and wished to punish the man for having made it; but Frederic replied, "It is not my intention that these poor peasants should be imprisoned for faults of this kind. Though they are often in the wrong, I cannot bring myself not to listen to their complaints. Am I not their father?" *

* Vie de Frederic II.

The advantages resulting to the public from these exhibitions of humane feeling, on the part of Frederic were, however, as has been before remarked, greatly overbalanced by the inconveniences, to which his interference in the administration of the laws frequently gave rise. As one instance, out of many, of the gross injustice he thus unintentionally committed, the account of the cause of the miller Arnold may be cited. This case, which made considerable noise in Europe at the time it happened, took place many years after the period we are now treating of; but as it relates to the system of jurisprudence of Frederic, it cannot be better placed, than as an illustration of this part of his history.

In one of the journeys which Frederic made every year, for the purpose of reviewing his troops, a miller of the name of Arnold, living near a village in Pomerania, presented to him a petition, in which he said, "Sire, I pay your majesty 300 rix-dollars * of rent for the water-mill, which belongs to you, in the village I inhabit; but the Count N—— diverts the course of the water, which is necessary to work the mill; and I have, in consequence, neither the means of paying your rent, nor of existing myself." Frederic sent the petition to the then chan-

* About fifty pounds sterling.

cellor, M. de Fürst *, with this marginal note to it: "Let justice be done to this miller." The cause was in consequence tried, and the miller lost it. The following year the miller presented another petition, stating to the king, that he had lost his cause, but that, nevertheless, the facts which he had before stated to his majesty were correct. Again Frederic sent the petition to the chancellor, with the following note: "Let this cause be brought before the second tribunal; and let great care be taken that justice is done to this man." The miller again had judgment given against him; and again petitioned the king, but more in the language of despair than of complaint.†

This last petition Frederic kept, with the view of endeavouring to verify the facts contained in it. For this purpose he sent to the place, under other pretexts, an old military officer, a man of probity; and ordered him to visit the spot, and to make an exact report, *to himself alone*, of every thing relating to the mill, and of the purposes to which the Count N—— applied the water. The officer, whose own estate was situated in the neighbourhood, fulfilled his commission without exciting any suspicions, and declared to the king, at his return, that, after

* M. de Fürst succeeded M. de Jarriges as chancellor, and was himself succeeded by M. de Crammer.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

having thoroughly examined the state of things on the spot, he was convinced that the mill could not work for want of water; which want of water was occasioned, by the diversion of the stream caused by the count, and which was, therefore, the cause of the miller's ruin.

But Frederic was not content with a single testimony upon the subject. After the departure of the officer, he had given the same commission, and in the same secret manner, to two other trustworthy persons, who also made him a similar report.

Frederic now became extremely indignant with his judges. He sent for the Chancellor Fürst, and the three judges, who sat in the court of appeal. He received them with the greatest severity; hardly permitting them to utter a word in their own defence, while he abused them, without measure, for their injustice and villany. He then took a pen, and wrote with his left hand, being at the moment suffering under a fit of gout in his right, a sentence, which condemned the count to restore, to the use of the miller, all the water which the stream contained; to pay the costs of the suit, and a sum, by way of reparation, to the miller. As soon as he had done this, he recommenced his invectives against the judges; told Fürst he no longer needed his services; ordered them

all to be confined in the fortress of Spandau; and concluded the audience by literally kicking them out of the room!

It is obvious that the conduct of the King of Prussia, upon this occasion, was neither decorous nor judicious, as practised towards the chief magistrates of his tribunals, even supposing they had committed the injustice, of which they were accused. But this was not the case. It afterwards appeared that the lands of the count were situated lower down the stream than the mill; and that, consequently, he did not receive the water, till after the miller had first made use of it. It is true, the count, for the purpose of irrigating his meadows, had made new channels for the stream, and thus, by increasing the rapidity of its descent, had left the original bed lower than was convenient for the purposes of the miller; so that those persons, who made their report to Frederic, were correct in stating, that it was the count's proceedings which had injured the miller. At the same time, the judges were entirely justified in the decision they had come to; it being a principle of jurisprudence, that a man has a right to do what he pleases with a stream which passes through his lands, provided he does not take it away from proprietors living below him. Of course it was, at the same time,

perfectly in the power of the miller to have remedied the inconvenience he complained of, by damming up the water to the height that was sufficient for his own purposes.

These violent proceedings of Frederic made a great sensation, not only in his own dominions, but throughout Europe. The lawyers of Berlin, and the ministers of Frederic, all took the part of the disgraced magistrates; but the king refused to listen to them. At length, more than six months after the affair had happened, Frederic read an account of the transaction in the "*Annales Politiques*" of Linguet, in which the whole matter was so ably and clearly discussed, that he at once saw the error he had committed. In consequence, he forthwith released the judges from Spandau, and restored them to their seats on the bench; all except the chancellor, with whom he had other causes for being dissatisfied, and who remained in disgrace. But it was not possible for the king, however much he might wish it, to repair the evil he had done. It was long before the tribunals of Brandenburgh recovered anything like feelings of independence. Judges, who knew themselves liable to be personally insulted by an absolute monarch for their decisions, were not likely to think so much of the justice of the cases that came before them, as of deciding them in the way, which might be the least likely

to bring upon them similar indignities. And suitors could not be expected to look either with respect or confidence towards magistrates, who had been or might be so treated by their sovereign.

Thiebault mentions, (as a remarkable instance of the power of Frederic over himself, with regard to outward appearances,) that he himself passed the very evening, on which the scene with the judges had taken place, with the king.* As they went out at one door, Thiebault entered at another; and found the king tranquilly seated in his arm-chair, who discussed with him various subjects of literature and philosophy, without appearing more agitated or excited than usual.

In one point of view, and one alone, the anecdote of the miller, from its being so extensively known, had a beneficial effect. It greatly increased the popularity of Frederic among the lower orders of his subjects, by proving to them, how much their representations and complaints to him were attended to. It also had, of course, the effect of making those complaints much more numerous. One of them became the occasion, of showing both the king and one of his judges in a very advantageous point of view. A peasant presented to the king a petition, against a decision of the tribunal of justice. The man, it would appear, had no reason on his

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

side, but Frederic thought otherwise, and therefore sent an order to the tribunal to revise their sentence. The cause was heard a second time, and the decision was the same as at first. Again the king sent it back to the tribunal, who confirmed their former judgments. Upon this Frederic became angry, and returned the sentence to Münchausen, the president of the tribunal, with these words written beneath it, "Ill-examined into; ill-considered; ill-decided." Münchausen replied with all the forms of respect; but with these remarkable words: "My head is at your disposal, but not my conscience, which obliges me to declare, that the judgment ought to continue as it has been given." Frederic at first was angry at the president's boldness; but finding, upon farther enquiry, he was in the right, he wrote him a letter applauding his firmness, and gave him an increase of salary.*

In the course of this year (1747), we find that Frederic was dangerously ill; for in a letter to Voltaire † he says, "I have had serious thoughts of dying, having had a slight attack of apoplexy; my constitution and my youth recalled me to life." Though this account would seem sufficiently alarming, it does not appear that it had any ulterior consequences.

It was also during this year, that two of the

* Frederic le Grand, &c.

† Dated, 22d February 1747.

most intimate of the friends of Frederic first entered his service, — Field Marshal Keith, and his elder brother, Earl Marischal. The two brothers had both been engaged in the rebellion of 1715*; to which they had been principally driven by the slights put upon them by the Duke of Argyll, who, upon the accession of George the First, became all-powerful in Scotland. Marshal Keith first entered the service of Spain, and subsequently that of Russia. His reasons for leaving the latter will be best understood, by a perusal of his own letter to his brother upon the subject. It is dated Potsdam, 28th October 1747.†

"As soon as I got aboard my ship in the bay of Riga, I wrote to my dearest brother to put him out of pain; but it was not then time to give you a full relation of everything that had happen'd to me, from your departure from

* Douglas's Scotch Peerage. — Eloge de Milord Mareschal, par d'Alembert.

† This letter, which has never yet been published, is preserved, as well as several others, which I shall have occasion subsequently to quote from, in the collection of MS. letters relating to the family of Keith, in the possession of the Honourable Admiral Fleming. For the permission to make use of them, I am indebted to the kindness of Lady Keith (Countess de Flahault). The letter here given in the text is an autograph letter of the marshal's. As he appears, in some parts of it, to have forgotten *his English*, I have endeavoured to restore the grammatical construction of those sentences; but without in any degree altering their meaning.

Mittau till then; but now that I am happily clear, I shall give you as exact an account as I can call to memory, of all the chicanes I went through from the malice of Bestouchef. You know, on the refusal you met with, I resolved absolutely to quite the Russian service; but it being then the season of the campaign, which is always reckoned there till the 15th October, I delay'd giveing my petition till winter; about the beginning of which I got account, that a very considerable corps would certainly march to Flanders or the Rhine in the beginning of the following year.

As I then commanded the troops in Livonia, the only ones which could be employed in that expedition, I made no doubt but the command would fall to me; not supposing they would take my division from me, to give it to another, just when it was going to enter on action; and what confirm'd me more in this idea was, that, on the forming the winter quarters, Field Marshal Lacy haveing proposed to the colledge of war that I should go to Revel, and command that part of the division which was to goe to Estland, while he commanded those who remain'd in Livonia, I was ordered to remain in Riga. This confirm'd me in my former opinion; but the refusal was only design'd to give me the mortification to see the division deliver'd to P. Repnin in my presence.

In the month of December F. M. Lacy was called to Petersburg, and then the march became publick. I received compliments from several there, and all the officers of the army did the like. You may believe I did not accept of them. I was sure my friend Bestoucheff wou'd do his utmost to hinder it, as well as my Lord Hyndford; whom I suspected at that time to doe me in particular ill offices, of which I have been convinced since, for he endeavoured to make F. M. Lacy believe that I spoke ill of him. I wrote to some of my friends at court to know who wou'd have the command; to which they answered, it was designed for P. Repnin: tho' I know he's a good officer, yet as he was gouvernour to the great duke, and great master of the artillery, both employments requiring the presence of person, and that I knew besides that he was no great friend of Bestoucheff's, I cou'd hardly believe the news; but the last reason was just what got him the commission: the chancellor did not care to see one who was not intirely at his devotion so near the great duke; and as he had his eye on one Tchoglokof, who is married to a relation of the empress's, and is without despute the silliest fellow in the empire, he wanted to get the other at a distance.

As soon as I knew this, which was in the end of Jan^{ry}, I desired my *demission*, and at the

same time wrote to Bestoucheff, that as he had assured me, in the letter where he refused you the permission to live in Russia, that on a proper occasion he would employ all his credit in my favour, I was perswaded he wou'd think this the properest one, since it was to procure me my congé.

He wrote me a long answer, of which I shall send you a copy as soon as I return to Berlin, in which he told me that it was not his fault you had not been received; that if you had desired to make your peace with the King of England, the empress wou'd with pleasure have employ'd her intrest with him to that effect, and afterwards would have been extremely pleas'd to have seen you, not only in her dominions, but also in her service. He then told me Prince Repnin was to march with the auxiliary troops, which was intirely done out off regaird to me, who was a person so necessary, that they could not let me go out of the empire, where I was absolutely necessary to defend the frontires against an unquiet neighbour. And you must know, for this defence there was to remain three regiments of foot, and some poor dragoons. He then told me, I had asked my demission too late; that the army was in motion, and therefore the campaign begun; but that if I persisted in my resolution till next winter quarters, I should surely have it. After

which he let me know, that I had been something too well paid the services I had done; but that if I would stay I might expect preferment, gratifications, &c. I shall send you likewise my answer, which was, that I was willing to stay till the winter, since he thought I had ask'd too late, as there is indeed an *ordonnance*, that officers must aske their discharge by the first of January; and mine was dated the 30th of that month; but that I expected positively it would be given me when that time came. To this I had answer, that he was sorry his friendly advices had not better effect; and that as the affair did not regard his department, that for the future I shou'd address to the college of war.

Somewhile after, I delivered up to Repnin the foot, except three regiments, with whom and the horse I continued: but this they thought still too much, and therefore I got another order to give up the whole horse to Lt. General Liven, and to remain with the command of two regiments of land *milice*, on which I got my white coat made; and this was my division, as genl. in chief. But finding I had no answer from the colledge of war, I wrote a letter, in the end of May, to Genl. Apraxin, to know if I was really to continue my service till the winter, because, otherwise, I wanted to dispose of my equipage, which cost me considerably to maintain: to which he answered, that the empress

had order'd it to be given me, and that he would send it as soon as possible.

At the same time, one of my friends at Petersburgh wrote to me that my congé was ready, but that I could not receive it till I had sign'd some paper, the contents of which he did not know; and that he was well inform'd that if I refused to sign it, the resolution was taken to arrest me. You know what that signifies. Some days after, he wrote me another billet, that my discharge was sent to the F. Marshal, with a reverse that I should never serve, directly or indirectly, against Russia; and that if I refused, that the feldt marshal shou'd arrest me. While I was reading the billet, an adjutant came, desiring I should go to the F. M. I found the poor man in the greatest consternation possible: he had the auditor general with him, and another, as witnesses. He told me my *demission* was on the table, but that he had an order from the colledge of war not to deliver it to me, till I had sign'd another paper. I desired they might be read to me. The *demission* was a simple one, in the ordinary form, signed by the empress, the first of July: the order of the colledge of war, of the fourth, to exclude me out of the army; and which was already published to the commissariate and bureau of provisons, that I might receive no more pay nor forage.

When they were both read, I told the F. M.

that I was visibly already out of the Russian service, both by the empresse's *demmission*, and the colledge's order; I could not see on what pretence they could impose laws on a British subject, who might serve when and where he would: on which the F. M. begg'd me to consider of it. I said it was a scandalous paper; to which he answered, that it was indeed scandalous for those who imposed it. As I had no mind to make the journey to Siberia, I desired it might be read to me. The contents were, that I promised never to serve, directly nor indirectly, against Russia; and that if I fail'd, I submitted to be judged by the Russian military articles. As soon as I heard it read, I told the general auditor, that I was ready to sign it immediately; because I knew the articles too well, not to be sure that there was not any one that forbid a free Englishman, as I then was, to serve in what manner I would: on which I signed the paper, and giving it back to the auditor, I told him that if ever they took me alive serveing against Russia, I was willing they should make a new article to condemn me. I was very sorry for what I had said, and I saw the F. M. was no less; for I was sure the fellow wou'd write it immediately to Apraxin, who would draw consequences from it, that might be dangerous: but as I had my *demission* and passport, I resolved to prevent them; and haveing found an

English ship ready to sail, I took my passage aboard for England, being afraid to come here directly by land, for fear of being arrested in Courland.

In this manner I got clear of the Russian dominions, but had a very bad passage to the Sound, nineteen days' contrary wind and blowing weather; for which I was not sorry, for this gave me a pretext of quitting my Englishman at the Sound, and declaring that I would go by land thro' Holland. They were very inquisitive at Copenhagen, if my real intention was to go to England; and the Duke of Sonderbourg made me overtures of entering into that service. As soon as I got on shore in Denmark, I wrote a letter to the King of Prussia, offering him my service, and soon after set out for Hambourg, where I received a very gracious answer, on which I went straight to Berlin, where two days after my arrival he declared me field marshal of his army. As he stay'd only one day there, I had no resolution more. Baron Maidefelt had already told me that I was to have 8000 crowns a year, with which I can live easier here then with twelve in Russia, where our immense equipages eat up all our income: and I find I have really more than for one; therefore, consider what a pleasure it would be to me to share it with my dearest brother. I know it would not be in the least disagreeable

to the king, and even quite the contrary; but in some posts, C^te^ Rothembourg, who is almost as impatient to see you as I am, will write to you more fully on this subject.

I have now the honour, and, which is still more, the pleasure of being with the king at Potsdam, where he ordered me to come two days after he declared me field marshal; where I have the honour to dine and sup with him almost every day. He has more wit than I have wit to tell you; speaks solidly and knowingly on all kind of subjects; and I am much mistaken if, with the experience of four campaigns, he is not the best officer of his army. He has several persons with whom he lives in almost the familiarity of a friend, but no favourite; and has a natural politeness for every body who is about him. For one who has been four days about his person, you will say I pretend to know a great deal of his character; but what I tell you, you may depend upon: with more time I shall know as much of him, as he will let me know; and all his ministry knows no more. Adieu, my dearest brother. Every week you shall have a letter from me, but not so long as this."

Field Marshal Keith continued to enjoy the favour, confidence, and intimacy of his sovereign, till his glorious death during the seven years' war. He appears to have been a man of great military ability, to which were united a simplicity and

amiability of character, which caused him to be universally beloved. The attachment of the two brothers was also of the most intimate and beautiful kind. Of this the natural consequence was, that Lord Marischal soon followed the marshal into the service of the King of Prussia. Lord Marischal seems to have possessed a cultivated mind, and to have been full of amiable and kindly feelings. Frederic soon made him his intimate friend; and Lord Marischal returned the king's friendship, by a devoted admiration and love for him, which never varied. Frederic appears to have felt and appreciated these qualities of his character, as there is no one of his friends, to whom he appears to have been so invariably kind and attentive. He appointed Lord Marischal, in 1750, his ambassador extraordinary to France, gave him the order of the Black Eagle, and made him governor of Neufchatel. This latter situation does not appear to have suited him, as there exist several letters from him to his brother, detailing to him the inconveniences he suffered, while residing at Neufchatel.*

In 1759, he was sent by the King of Prussia as his ambassador to the court of Madrid; where, having had the good fortune to discover the existence of the family compact between the different branches of the house of Bourbon, he

* MS. Letters from Earl Marischal to Field Marshal Keith, in the collection of the Honourable Admiral Fleming.

communicated the intelligence to Mr. Pitt, who was then in the English government. This service was considered so important, that he shortly afterwards received a pardon from George the Second. He, upon this, returned to England, and obtained an act of parliament, reversing his attainder in a limited manner. He repurchased, in consequence, part of his family estates, and remained in England till 1764. He had intended to have fixed his residence in Scotland, but the repeated entreaties of his royal friend for his return to Berlin, induced him to abandon this resolution. Upon one occasion, Frederic, after imploring him to come back to Prussia, concluded by saying, "If I had a fleet, I would come and carry you off by force." Lord Marischal, in consequence, settled himself under the protection of his former patron and friend, whose favour he continued to enjoy till the end of his long and honourable life.

In the year 1777, a traveller thus speaks of him:— "We dined almost every day with Lord Marischal, who was then eighty-five years old, and was still as young in body and mind as ever. The king had given him a house at the end of the garden of Sans Souci, and went frequently to see him in it. He had dispensed with his dining with him, as his health would not permit him to remain long at table. He was the only one of all those, who had been in favour with the king,

who could really be called his friend, and who was devotedly attached to his person. The king, who was alive to friendship, had remarked this disposition in him, and had set so much value upon it, that there never was any person for whom he had shown so much attention, deference, and affection. Every body, in consequence, paid their court to him. He was never called anything else but the *king's friend;* and, indeed, he alone merited the title, for he had always stood well with him, without flattering him." * Lord Marischal died the year after this account of him was written.

The two next years in the life of Frederic offer but few interesting events of a public nature. The peace of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, to the completion of which the King of Prussia contributed by his negotiations, put an end to the war, which had for many years continued between the united kingdoms of France and Spain, on the one part, and England, Sardinia, Holland, and the empress queen, on the other. From the contracting powers at this treaty, Frederic received the guarantee of Silesia, and of the county of Glatz.

The Russian government about this time increased its military forces, and seemed at one moment inclined to attack Prussia; but these hostile intentions were for the present warded

* Dutens, Voyageur qui se repose.

off by means of negotiations.* The pretext of Russia for these threats of disturbing the peace of Europe, was the alleged evil intentions of Sweden with regard to that power; intentions which were supposed to be fomented by the King of Prussia. In order to exculpate himself from these accusations, as well as to avert a war, Frederic wrote a letter to King George the Second of England, explaining his own conduct, and requesting the mediation of that monarch. "Ready and disposed as I am," says Frederic, "to take any steps that may be necessary, I offer with much pleasure to enter into all the measures which your majesty shall judge proper for the maintenance of peace; and I am convinced that his most christian majesty, who is as zealous as myself for the preservation of the peace of Europe, and the tranquillity of the northern provinces, will join his efforts to ours, in order that we may concur efficaciously towards this object."†

The court of Vienna was not behind that of Petersburgh in assuming a warlike attitude: new regiments were raised, and the principles of the Prussian tactics were introduced into the Austrian army. Frederic easily perceived that all these preparations were eventually to be directed

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Letter of the King of Prussia to the King of England, dated 18th March 1749.

against himself; and he therefore determined, while using all his endeavours to procure peace, to be also prepared for war. With this view he hastened to put into execution his plans of amelioration, in the different branches of his government; by means of which he expected to obtain greater pecuniary resources, as well as a more formidable military force.

The department of the finances had been placed upon an exact and simple footing by Frederic William; but his son much improved it. The revenue of the state in the Prussian dominions consisted principally, in the produce of the royal domains; in the tolls and customs payable at the entrance and egress of all the towns, and on the canals and rivers; in the excise, the lottery, the monopoly of tobacco and of coffee; and the establishment of the post-office for letters, and post-horses. Of direct taxes there existed hardly any.* In the administration of these various branches of the revenue, Frederic, with the advice of different financiers whom he called to his aid, established a system so clear, so simple, and, at the same time, so effectual, that he greatly augmented his revenues, without any additional burthens upon his subjects. During the latter years of the reign of Frederic, the revenues of the state are

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

supposed to have amounted to about four millions sterling; nearly, if not quite, double what they were in the reign of Frederic William.

Nor was it only in the manner of perception of the public dues, that Frederic sought for an increase of income. He was also constantly employed in devising improvements, by means of alterations in the duties; by taking them off from some commodities, and thereby increasing their consumption; and adding them to others, in a way which did not diminish their sale. These experiments were not always successful, though they frequently were: but, undoubtedly, towards the end of his long reign, Frederic had arrived, as far as any sovereign ever did, at perfection in that part of finance, which consists in the extracting as much as possible from the people, without overburthening or impoverishing them; and receiving into the royal coffers the sums so extracted, with the least possible deductions.

In a poor country like Prussia, possessed only of small natural resources, it was, undoubtedly, wise to impose as few direct taxes as possible; and it was the same circumstance, which induced the sovereigns of that country, knowing that they could not considerably increase their imposts, to endeavour to have always a considerable treasure by them, in case of war or other emergencies. Towards the end of his reign, the

treasure of Frederic, preserved in the vaults of the palace at Berlin, amounted to about twelve millions sterling. Besides this sum, Frederic had also a smaller treasure, which remained with him at Potsdam, called "*La Chatouille*," and which amounted to about two millions and a half. From this last sum, Frederic was accustomed to take, whatever money he wanted for his buildings, pictures, trinkets, or other objects of luxury relative to his own person. There were also some other establishments, which were paid out of this fund. Thiebault says, it was curious, each year, on the 2d or 3d of June, to see the carts arrive at the palace at Berlin, filled with little barrels of silver, which were to be deposited in the vaults with the rest of the treasure. This treasure was under the care of an old non-commissioned officer, of great integrity, who alone had the key of it.*

But the system of excises and customs, in which the Prussian revenue consisted, had also its inconveniences, from the quantity of custom-house officers and fiscal personages, with whom the country was inundated; and the severe measures, to which they were frequently obliged to have recourse. The fiscal regulations extended, as it would appear, even to the

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

royal family; at least the following ludicrous anecdote would lead us to imagine so:—

When the Princess Elizabeth of Brunswick * was confined in the fortress of Custrin, she received from her mother, the Duchess of Brunswick, as a new-year's gift, a gown of Lyons silk.† The custom-house officer of the town, who was a Frenchman, brought the packet himself to the castle, and insisted upon opening and visiting it, on the ground of obedience to the king's orders, and the necessity of executing his duties with fidelity. The princess having repeatedly forbid his touching her gown, and ordered him to leave the room, at length gave him a box on the ear. Upon this the man retired, and drew up an elaborate complaint to the king upon the subject. Frederic sent it back to the chief of the customs, with this postcript:—"*In this affair, the loss of the duties falls upon me: the piece of silk must remain with the princess, and the box on the ear with him who received it. As to the pretended disgrace incurred, I relieve the complainant from it; for it can never be supposed,*

* Daughter of the Duchess of Brunswick, sister of Frederic. She had been married to Frederic William, the heir to the throne of Prussia, afterwards Frederic William the Second, from whom she had been divorced, on account of her misconduct.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Sejour à Berlin.

that the hand of a beautiful and agreeable princess can dishonour the face of a custom-house officer."*

One of the points of internal amelioration, to which Frederic devoted the most attention during his reign, was the establishment of colonies in different parts of his territories, which had hitherto remained barren and desert.† He was deeply sensible of the necessity of increasing the population of his dominions, as well for the purpose of recruiting his armies, as for the improvement of his financial resources. He saw in these colonies, the source of additions both to his riches and his power; and he, therefore, spared neither pains nor expense to settle them, and make them flourish.‡ With this view, colonists were invited from all parts of Europe, and were settled in great numbers in the Prussian states. Frederic was at the expense of building villages for them, and stocking them with live stock, agricultural implements, and tools for different trades; and of advancing small sums of money to set the colonists up.

In many instances these establishments flourished greatly: in some, the individuals composing them were too idle to improve the lands

* Observations sur les Armées de sa Majesté Prussienne, avec quelques Anecdotes de la Vie privée de ce Monarque.

† Vie de Frederic II.

‡ Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

which it was intended to bring into cultivation, and, consequently, only continued to exist in misery, and to occasion fresh expenses to their founder. Sometimes the colonists, who were collected from all parts, and frequently without sufficient examination as to their characters, turned out to be persons of bad and turbulent dispositions, who excited their companions to idleness and insubordination.* Occasionally, actual rebellions took place in colonies, from the refusal of the inhabitants to work: and, upon more than one occasion, a detachment of the military was obliged to be sent against them. But Frederic always gave especial orders that no severity should be used towards them, unless it was found to be absolutely necessary.

Upon the whole, the instances, in which the colonies were not successful would appear to bear but a small proportion, as compared with those that succeeded; nor would it seem, that the causes of their failure were at all attributable to any defect, in the system of colonizing pursued by Frederic. Accurate reports of the state of the different colonies, which exhibited all the details of the progress they had made, of their actual condition, and future prospects, were made to the chamber of domains twice in every year. The result of these reports was annually

* Mirabeau, de la Monarchie Prussienne.

presented to the king, who examined it with care and attention, and made remarks upon it.*

The extreme kindness of Frederic, in listening to the complaints of the colonists, was very remarkable, even as compared with that which he invariably showed, to all the lower orders of his subjects. Of his attention to the peasants in their demands for justice, several instances have been already given; and to these may be added one or two anecdotes, out of many, in proof of his undeviating attention to their wants and wishes. When he ascended the throne, great numbers of the cultivators of the soil were serfs, who were subject by law to their feudal lords; and who were also incapable of possessing any property of what kind soever, or even of marrying, without the permission of their masters.† Frederic determined, if possible, to put an end to this degrading and disgraceful state of things; but, in so doing, he found great obstacles, not only on the part of the feudal lords, but also from the peasants themselves, who were so sunk in ignorance, that they dreaded any change. He commenced, however, his ameliorations in the wisest way; namely, by giving up all the rights of servitude over the peasants on the domains of the crown. His example was, by degrees, followed by various Prussian pro-

* Vie de Frederic II. † Ibid.

prietors; and, finally, in 1766, when he thought his people were better prepared for it, he abolished servitude throughout his dominions, by a special edict.

Whenever, by giving up his own rights, Frederic thought he could benefit his peasantry, he was always ready to do so. The King of Prussia had the appointment in himself of all the ministers of religion, throughout his dominions; and the choice of them was generally delegated by him to the body of clergy, called the Grand Consistory. If, however, the peasants of any village objected to the minister appointed by the consistory, Frederic almost invariably allowed them to choose one for themselves, provided he was a person of good character. If the consistory complained, as was frequently the case, Frederic used to moderate their wish for patronage, by such answers as the following, which were those sent by him upon three separate occasions: —

"Good character is the principal thing that should be regarded in a village pastor. If he pleases the peasants, do not trouble them about it."

"His majesty has no wish to prevent the congregations from choosing the pastor they like best, since it is to them he is to preach; provided always, they select a man of good morals and irreproachable conduct."

" I will not have the peasants annoyed about their clergy and their schoolmasters: on the contrary, it is my intention, that you should give them those they wish to have, provided there is nothing to be said against their conduct."

CHAPTER II.

FREDERIC'S KINDNESS TO THE PEASANTS: — HE ESTABLISHES MAGAZINES OF PROVISIONS: — INSTITUTES MANUFACTURES. — THE PRE-EMINENCE AND DISCIPLINE OF THE ARMY. — TRENCK'S ACCOUNT OF THE TRIALS ENDURED BY THE KING'S BODY-GUARDS. — FREDERIC'S KINDNESS AND FAMILIARITY TOWARDS HIS SOLDIERS: — HIS BRAVERY ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS: — HIS VIEWS ON PUBLIC INSTRUCTION: — HE FOUNDS SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES. — THE ACADEMY OF BERLIN, AND ITS MEMBERS. — THE MARSHAL DE SAXE VISITS FREDERIC.

At all hours and in all places, Frederic was accessible to the peasants, who came to make complaints or requests to him. Every peasant who entered Potsdam was asked, whether he came to see the king. If, when the report from the gates was brought to Frederic, he saw that a peasant, who had declared his intention of seeing him, had not asked for an audience, he immediately sent one of his attendants after him, who was directed to follow him, if he had already left the town. When he found him, he was to ask him why he had not presented himself to the king, and, if his not having done so proceeded from timidity, to encourage him to return. Every peasant who saw Frederic, returned home delighted with his interview with

him, even if it had not been a successful one to his wishes; so full of kindness, consolation, and protection were his words and manner. In spite of his love of sarcasm and pleasantry, he was never known to indulge in them, at the expense of one of these poor people. The natural consequence of this considerateness and attention of the king towards the lower orders, was, an unbounded attachment on their part towards him; whom they regarded, with truth, as their father and their friend.

During one of Frederic's journeys through Silesia, the wife of a peasant, near Breslau, had presented to him a basket of fruit; and had been so touched by the kindness, with which he received it, that she determined to send him another the next year to Potsdam. She accompanied the offering with the following letter:—

"Most dear, and most clement, our lord the king,

"As our fruit has not succeeded better this year than the last, you must condescend to receive it, such as it is. I and my husband have picked out the best we could find, and we have packed it up as well as we were able with straw and hay. We hope you will eat it in good health. May God give you a long life, in order that you may be able to come and see us for many years to come. I will always keep the best I have for

you. I and my husband entreat you, therefore, to regard us with favour; especially, because our little bit of land produces less than it did, and that we have a debt upon it of 120 crowns, ten groschen, and six fenins. Moreover, we commend you to the protection of Almighty God; and we shall be, till death, and for ever, of your majesty,

"the faithful and devoted subjects,

"I and my husband."*

To this communication Frederic replied thus:—

"Good mother,

"I am much obliged to you for your fine fruit. If God grants health and life to me, I will return and see you a year hence. Keep something for me, in order that I may find it when I come to you. With regard to what you tell me of your little bit of land being charged with a debt of 120 crowns, ten groschen, and six fenins, that is really a bad business. You should be very economical, otherwise your affairs will go back instead of advancing. I send you herewith 200 crowns, which I have also packed up as well as I was able. Pay your debts with them, and free your bit of land.

* Vie de Frederic II.

Take care to economize as much as you are able: this is a counsel which I give you seriously, as your attached king,

"FEDERIC."

It would be endless to quote the numerous similar acts of kindness, performed by Frederic towards the poor and needy of his subjects. He endeavoured, by every means in his power, to ameliorate their condition; and if he ever failed in so doing, it was not, at least, from want of inclination. It was from the bottom of his heart he spoke, when he expressed those beautiful sentiments to the bishop of Varmia:— "Believe me, if I knew every thing, if I could read every thing myself, and answer every one myself, all my subjects should be happy. But, alas! I am but a man!"

In speaking of the measures adopted by Frederic, for the improvement or happiness of his subjects, the great magazines for corn, established by him in most of the towns of his dominions, must not be omitted. By means of these he was enabled to guard against the failure of crops in districts, which, from their natural sterility, were especially liable to such a calamity. Nor was their use less in time of war, when they were employed for the provisioning of the army; who were thus supported, without occasioning any inconvenience to the

inhabitants of the country. Upon one occasion, Frederic, during a severe famine in Saxony, was enabled, by means of his stores of corn, which were not wanted in his own territories, to feed the whole of that country, till the pressure of distress was passed. By means of this prudent foresight, as wise as it was humane, Frederic was also able, even when no actual scarcity was apprehended, so to regulate the price of corn, as to prevent it from rising beyond the means of the lower orders. The magazines were filled, when corn was very cheap: when the price seemed likely to rise too high, a certain portion of the royal stores was thrown into the market, and thus kept it down to a fair level.*

It would be, perhaps, useless to enter into any minute detail of the various branches of manufacture, which Frederic, during the course of his reign, endeavoured to introduce into his dominions. Upon all of them he spent large sums of money, and, in most instances, was successful, —not in obtaining any remuneration for himself, but in benefiting his subjects, by opening for them new sources of industry and prosperity. The manufacture of china was one entirely of his creation. The workmen were obtained from Dresden; and the expenses of the estab-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

lishment were paid by royal money. The establishment soon prospered, and has ever since continued to do so: and the clay now made use of for Berlin china, surpasses in whiteness that of the rest of Europe. Woollen manufactures were also introduced by Frederic: while the establishment at Spandau, for the making of arms, which was instituted by his father, was greatly augmented by him. Later in his reign, principally when the Count Hertzberg was his minister, he established the manufacture of silk, which succeeded to a considerable extent.*

Determined as Frederic was to rule by himself, and, as it were, in his own person, over all the departments of government, he was yet more peculiarly so, with regard to every thing connected with the military service.† There existed, it is true, at Berlin, a minister of war; but his duties were confined to the subaltern detail of providing for the lodging, provisions, and clothing of the army, without ever presuming to exercise any authority or any patronage.‡

It was the intention of Frederic, as much from policy as from inclination, that the military should be considered the first order in the

* Mirabeau, de la Monarchie Prussienne.

† Vie de Frederic II.

‡ Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

state. In a country like Prussia, possessing no natural defences, and surrounded by more powerful neighbours than herself, and depending, therefore, for her safety entirely upon the bayonets of her soldiers, this pre-eminence was, perhaps, necessary, at all events not unnatural. In order to make it the more complete, Frederic was himself always a soldier. He never appeared except in a military uniform; and moreover was accustomed, from time to time, in imitation of his father, to exercise his soldiers himself; in other words, to perform the office of a drill serjeant. His brother, and the other princes of his family, were also expected to occupy themselves in the same manner.

But though the pre-eminence of the military was established, and acknowledged throughout the Prussian dominions, so excellent was the discipline established by Frederic, that the peaceable citizens had never to complain of any exactions or outrages, exercised towards them either by soldiers or officers. One excellent regulation of Frederic, with regard to his army, was, the enabling persons of all ranks to rise equally to the highest situations, provided they had merit, — a rule the more admirable, as it was in direct opposition with that established by other despotic sovereigns, and which prevailed over the greater part of Europe at that

time. How tenacious Frederic was, of enforcing his own more liberal, as well as more rational, view of military promotion, may be gathered from the following ancedote. A Hanoverian count wrote to the King of Prussia, requesting him to receive his son into his army, and to make him at once an officer, in favour of his high birth. Frederic thought this a very ridiculous pretension, and dictated, in consequence, the following answer: —

"Your letter of the 22d of May has informed me of the request you make to me, on the subject of your son. But I am obliged to tell you, that I have long forbid any counts being received as such into my army; for when they have served one or two years, they retire; and merely make their short military career a subject of vain boasting. If your son wishes to serve, the title of count can be of no use to him; but he will be promoted if he learns his profession well."

Postscript in the king's own hand: —

"Young counts, who have learned nothing, are the most ignorant people in all countries. In England, the king's son begins by being a sailor on board a ship, in order to learn the manœuvres belonging to that service. If it should miraculously happen that a count could be good

for any thing, it must be by banishing all thoughts about his titles and his birth, for these are only follies. Every thing depends upon personal merit.

"FEDERIC."*

As the population of his own territories was not sufficient to supply the necessary reinforcements for his army, the King of Prussia was obliged to have recourse to other means for this purpose.† With this view, recruiting parties of Prussian officers were sent to different parts of Europe, generally in disguise; whose business it was, to try and persuade the inhabitants of the countries where they were, to enter the Prussian service, as well as to engage all the deserters they could meet with, and even to seduce others to become deserters. This was sometimes a service of danger, as the Prussian recruiters, if found out, were sure to be ill-treated, and, upon more than one occasion, were summarily put to death. For the toleration of this sort of seduction of men from their duty, no excuse can be found; though it was, perhaps, a less crying act of injustice, than the forcible abduction practised by Frederic William. Some instances of this latter proceeding, however, occurred during

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

the reign of Frederic, but generally without his knowledge.*

But the most dreadful part of Frederic's military system was, the extreme severity of discipline and of punishment, to which, as has been already mentioned, the soldier was obliged to submit. This was carried to so great a length, and desertion was so difficult, that attempts at suicide among the soldiers, in order to rid themselves of their misery, were not unfrequent. Doctor Zimmermann relates, that an officer at Potsdam informed him, that during ten years, the number of cases of suicide committed in the little town of Potsdam was above three hundred. It also not unfrequently happened, that a soldier murdered a child, and then came and gave himself up to justice. This mode of getting rid of their lives, was adopted by some of them, instead of suicide, for this reason; — they thought, that if they committed suicide they should be subject to eternal punishment; whereas the murdered infant was sure to go to heaven, and they themselves had time to repent of their crime, and to make their peace with the Almighty. To such extremities did the barbarous conduct of their officers drive these unfortunate men; whose despair also sometimes, not unnaturally, took the turn of mutiny, and of putting to death the

* Vie de Frederic II.

officers who tormented them, or were particularly unpopular.*

It should be mentioned to his honour, that Prince Henry, the brother of the King of Prussia, was always an enemy to the excessive rigour exercised in the Prussian army; and more especially to the blows inflicted on the private soldiers, for slight inaccuracies or ignorance in going through their exercise. He used to say to his officers, "If a soldier performs an evolution ill, it is that you have not practised him sufficiently at it: exercise him an additional hour or two in the evening, and he will be sufficiently punished. If you strike him, you punish him on account of your own idleness!"

The account given by Trenck, in his Memoirs, of the discipline and the toils endured by the body-guards of Frederic, to whom he belonged, and who were considered, in many respects, the most distinguished troops in the service, may give us some idea of the sufferings of the Prussian military. He describes this regiment, as the best school for cavalry in the world: it was composed entirely of chosen men; and the uniform was the richest possible. He adds that, even in time of peace, he had hardly an hour in a day to himself. At four o'clock in the morning the exercise commenced; and trial

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

was made of all the new manœuvres, which the king intended to introduce into the tactics of the cavalry. These unhappy body-guards were obliged to leap over trenches, which were perpetually enlarged, till some of them fell in, and broke their legs or arms. They were also obliged, in charging, to leap over hedges, and so to continue their charge, at full gallop, for miles together; the consequence was, that they frequently brought home some of their number, either killed or wounded. At mid-day they mounted fresh horses, and recommenced their labours. It was also a very common thing to call them from their beds, and make them mount on horseback twice in one night. This was done to keep them on the alert; and any guardsman, who did not present himself on horseback and fully equipped in the space of eight minutes, was put under arrest for a fortnight. He adds, that he himself lost three horses in the space of one year; and that in the same space of time, during peace, the body-guards lost more men and horses, than they had done in two battles during the war.*

It is a more pleasing task, than dwelling upon this picture of harsh military servitude, to turn to the kindness, the attention, the familiarity of Frederic towards his soldiers, while enduring the

* Mémoires de Frederic Baron de Trenck.

fatigues of war. This was invariable; and endeared him so much to them, that, at his bidding, they were ready to affront all difficulties and dangers, and even the certainty of death itself. "Papa," and "Our good old Fritz," were the names of endearment by which they distinguished him. His manner of encouraging his soldiers to new exertions, when they were fatigued or out of humour, was by a judicious familiarity. Thus, in the second war of Silesia, when, on a certain occasion, the army had marched all night, and that it was necessary for them to set forward again in the morning in the midst of a snow storm, Frederic perceived that they were out of humour, and disposed to complain. He, therefore, descended from his horse, and began marching in the snow at their head: then, after a few moments of silence, he turned round to them and said, "Come, my friends, let us march. If we were a parcel of cowards, we should be now in our bed-gowns in a warm room: but we are soldiers; so come on." Upon hearing this appeal the soldiers proceeded cheerfully.* It was, indeed, his constant habit, whenever the march was a difficult one, to place himself at the head of the infantry, and to march on foot, in order to encourage them. †

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

During one of his campaigns, the bread supplied to the army was exceedingly bad; and the soldiers complained loudly of it. Frederic took an opportunity, when the soldiers were round him, of asking his neighbour for a piece of the bread. He eat it before them with apparent appetite, and then said, aloud, "In truth, this bread is not very good: however, one can eat it when one is hungry. I will take care, as soon as it is possible, that we have better: until then, let us make a virtue of necessity."

One morning, after a night march, the army halted: the king got off his horse close to a group of his guards, and said aloud, as he was getting off, "It would be agreeable if we had something good to drink here." At these words, several soldiers of the guards, who had a piece of bread and a small quantity of brandy, pressed forward, and offered their little provision to their sovereign. Frederic was much touched at this conduct, and said to them, "My children, if I could drink brandy, I would accept, with much pleasure, that which you offer me. I thank you for this mark of your attachment, which I will not forget." He then turned to his attendants, and added, "There is not a happier king than me on the face of the earth." He ordered the names of

the soldiers to be taken down, and distributed a Frederic d'or apiece to them.*

Upon the occasion of a long and fatiguing march, Frederic observed an old non-commissioned officer, belonging to the regiment of the Prince of Brunswick, who seemed to have great difficulty in keeping up with the regiment: — "What is the matter with you," said the king. "I am old and feeble," answered the serjeant, "and I find I can hardly manage to march with the rest."—"How long have you served?" —"Forty-five years; I served under the late king your father, and I have followed your majesty in the wars of Silesia."—"Well, when we are in winter quarters, you shall be *invalided*, and I will give you besides a good place."—"No, sire, I thank you; but that I should consider a disgrace: I wish to live and die a soldier."— "You are wrong, for in that case you might live quietly, and take care of yourself in your old age."—"Ah, sire, I am not used to that; and then how could I fulfil the duties of any place, having never learned to write." Here the conversation concluded; and the veteran imagined the king would think no more of him. But that very evening Frederic sent him one of his horses to ride during the march; and the

* Vie de Frederic II.

next winter he appointed him first lieutenant in a garrison regiment.*

Sometimes he mingled with his familiarity to his soldiers, a degree of good-humoured pleasantry, which was peculiarly attaching. During the seven years' war, immediately previous to the battle of Lissa, a grenadier, a Frenchman, was brought before him, who had been taken in the act of deserting. "Grenadier," said the king to him, "why did you wish to quit us." —"Because, sire, our affairs go on so ill." —"Well," replied Frederic, "I allow they do not go on very well; but, my friend, just let us fight one more battle; and if, after that, our affairs do not go on better, why, we will desert together."—"Agreed, sire; I consent to that," replied the soldier; who retired without any more thoughts or desire of quitting the Prussian service. †

On the evening of the day of the successful combat at Burkersdorf, during the seven years' war, Frederic was riding, accompanied by the Russian general Czernichef, when they met a wounded soldier: — "What is the matter," said the king; "Nothing," replied the soldier; "for the enemies fly, and we are conquerors." But the king, then perceiving he was wounded, gave

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

him his handkerchief, saying at the same time, "You are wounded, my friend, take this handkerchief, and bind up your wound with it." Upon this Czernichef, remarked; "Sire, it is not wonderful that your soldiers should serve you with such devotion, since you treat them with so much kindness."

Ancedotes upon this subject might be multiplied, so as to be tedious; but there is one which ought not to be omitted, both on account of its affording a very striking example of the familiarity, which existed between Frederic and his soldiers, as well as of the dangers to which that sovereign exposed his person. One evening after a great battle *, Frederic approached a fire, which had been lighted by some of the grenadiers of his own regiment. The soldiers began to ask him where he had been during the battle; "Generally," said they, "you lead us yourself where the fire is hottest; but this time nobody saw you, and it is not right to abandon us so." The king, in a good-humoured manner, explained to them in what part of the field he had been, and his reasons for being there, which had prevented him from being at the head of his own regiment. As he began to grow warm, he unbuttoned his great coat, and a ball dropped out, which he had received in

* The battle of Torgau.

his clothes. The hole the ball had made in the great coat and coat was also perceptible. Upon this, the enthusiasm of the soldiers knew no bounds. They cried out, with all the tenderness of expression, belonging in the German tongue to the singular pronoun, "You are our own good old Fritz; you share in all our dangers with us: we will all die for you!" And the conversation concluded with their cheers, and their entreaties to the king, to take more care of his own safety.*

Thiebault relates, that he had seen at Berlin the suit of clothes worn by Frederic, towards the end of the seven years' war; and that the coat and the hat were pierced with balls in several places. Le Catt, the secretary of Frederic during the latter years of his life, had also in his possession a little gold box, which had been flattened by a ball, when in the king's breeches pocket at the battle of Zorndorf, and had thus saved him from a dangerous wound in the thigh.

The cool and determined courage of Frederic, on a day of battle, has, indeed, never been called in question, in spite of his unfavourable commencement at the battle of Mollwitz. Many anecdotes are told in proof of his great bravery, with regard to his own person; some

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

of which belong to the relation of particular battles. Among those, which are not so appropriated, there is one which deserves relation, from the authenticity of its source, as it was related by General Müller, to whom it happened. Müller, being then an aid-de-camp to one of the Prussian generals, was sent, during a battle, with orders from one part of the field to another. As he was galloping along, he met an officer, who stopped him, and whom he then recognized to be the king. Frederic began asking him questions, when a shell fell between their two horses. Frederic continued his conversation in the coolest manner, regarding the shell attentively with his glass; and not attending to the impatience of Müller, to avoid its probable effects. At length it exploded, but, fortunately, without hurting either of them; and the king, having obtained the information he wanted, allowed Müller to proceed.*

While upon the subject of Frederic's behaviour to his soldiers, it is right to mention, that though his kindness did not extend in an equal degree to the officers, they frequently received a portion of it; especially if he was pleased with the answers they made to him. A wild young man, a son of the Chancellor Cocceji's, was officer in a regiment in garrison at Pots-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

dam. To leave the garrison without permission was considered a heinous offence; but this did not deter Cocceji, from frequently visiting Berlin secretly. One day, as he was riding there, the king's carriage overtook him. He endeavoured to escape into the wood; but Frederic saw him, and sent for him. "Cocceji," said he, in a severe tone, "where are you going?"—"Sire, I am on my way to Berlin *incognito*." This expression made the king laugh, and he allowed Cocceji to continue his journey.*

An instance of more solid and substantial kindness than this, is related of Frederic, towards a poor but deserving officer. The king one day sent him the cross of merit. The officer said to the page who brought it, "My friend, I know it is the custom to give you, in return, eleven ducats; and I have very few more than that number in my possession. These ducats are more necessary to me than the cross of merit, which you have brought me, for I cannot exist without them: whereas, if I have thus far conducted myself like a brave man without this cross, I shall continue to do so without having it: and, on the other hand, if I am a coward, the cross will never make me a brave man. Take the cross, therefore, back to the king, and tell him what I have said; and add, that I am not in

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

want of such baubles as these, to incite me to do my duty." The page related the issue of his mission to Frederic; who, the next day, sent him back to the officer, with the cross of merit, and a letter containing 100 ducats. "My dear captain," wrote Frederic, "I had forgot that I owed you 100 ducats: I now remember it, and send them to you. I hope you will receive them, together with the cross of merit, which is so justly due to you." Upon receiving this gracious communication, the officer said to the page, "This changes the state of things, my good friend. Instead of eleven ducats, here are two and twenty for you: and tell the king, that as he pays his debts, I will also pay mine."

One of the branches of government which the most occupied Frederic, from the conclusion of the two first wars of Silesia till the end of his reign, was that of public instruction. This, as might easily be supposed, had been much neglected under the previous sovereigns of Prussia. Frederic began by collecting all the information he could upon the subject; and he then proceeded, by degrees, to found schools upon the most approved system, throughout his dominions. In his different tours, one of his first questions to the local authorities, always related to the degree, in which each neighbourhood was provided with the means of instruction. Where he found these deficient, he

immediately increased them. This continued amelioration in education, went on in an increasing ratio, for a long series of years; and it happened at several periods of his reign, that he founded as many as sixty schools in the course of one year.

He was also very solicitous to improve the mode of education of the higher orders. With this view, he favoured and encouraged his colleges and universities, by granting them privileges, and procuring for them able professors. But his great work in favour of education, was the extensive establishment he founded at Berlin, under the name of, *The Civil and Military School for the sons of gentlemen.** At the first institution of this school, he wrote himself a long and detailed instruction, for the professors who conducted it. In this he decided for them, what they were to teach, as well as the manner of teaching; and explained, in detail, the regulations of every kind, which he wished to have enforced. This document is doubly valuable, first, as proving the extreme interest taken by Frederic in this establishment, and the degree to which he had studied the subject of educa-

* I have thought it better to give a short account of *the Civil and Military School* in this place, while speaking of education in general; though, in fact, it was not founded till the year 1764.

tion; and secondly, from the ability with which it is composed for the purposes intended.

Nor did the care of Frederic for the Civil and Military School cease with its establishment. He continued always feelingly alive to its interests; and one of his constant cares was the procuring for it able and trust-worthy professors. Of these the greater number came either from Paris or Switzerland; and the king was accustomed to employ D'Alembert, Diderot, and other learned men to choose them for him. Among those who did most honour to this establishment may be mentioned, Sulzer, Toussaint, Weguelin, De Castillon, Borrelly, and lastly Thiebault, from whose account this short notice is taken.*

The Academy, the restoration of which by Frederic has been already noticed, was the subject of the peculiar attention of its sovereign. By the advice of its first president, Maupertuis, this institution was divided into four classes,—mathematicks, experimental philosophy, metaphysicks or speculative philosophy, and literature; the union of which different branches formed, "The Royal Academy of Sciences and Belles Lettres." The funds of this society proceeded principally from the monopoly of the publication of almanacks. It had also the mo-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

nopoly of the publication of the laws, and of maps and charts; as well as the possession of certain estates, planted with mulberry trees for the encouragement of the cultivation of silk-worms; but these latter sources of revenue never proved very considerable. The king assigned to it apartments in a vast building belonging to him, of which the lower floor was occupied as the royal stables. This destination occasioned M. Formey, the secretary of the Academy, to remark, that "*his majesty had placed the horses and mules below, and the asses above.*" *

In the same building, the king established also an academy or school of painting, which, however, having only very insufficient funds at its control, never arrived either at eminence or consideration; but continued to linger on unnoticed.

It was one of the most constant cares of Frederic's life, to induce learned and scientific men to become members of his Academy; and to come and settle at Berlin, and there prosecute the course of their studies. In consequence of these efforts, this literary society was at different times dignified and adorned by the talents and labours of Euler, Voltaire, Algarotti, Maupertuis, D'Argens, D'Arnaud, Sulzer, Bitaubé,

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

Merian, Lambert, Margraff, Achard, La Grange, Beguelin, Formey, Toussaint, Denina, Ramler, Castillon, and others of equal merit.

Frederic showed his affection for his Academy, not only in his anxiety to procure for it worthy members, but also by writing papers upon various subjects, to be read at its sittings. He also frequently composed the funeral orations of academicians of celebrity, which it was the custom to read at the Academy, upon the occasion of its first meeting after their deaths. Thiebault gives us an account of several, which he was himself employed by the king, first to correct, and afterwards to read to the Academy. Among these was the one occasioned by the death of Voltaire; and another by that of his nephew Prince Henry of Prussia; whose loss, according to Thiebault, he seems to have most feelingly and deeply deplored.

It was during the year 1749, that the illustrious Marshal de Saxe paid a visit to the King of Prussia at Potsdam; who received his guest with all the attention due to so eminent a man, as well as with the affectionate intimacy, which he naturally felt for a brother commander. Algarotti, who was then in the service of Frederic, and who was frequently present at their interviews, describes their conversations, which principally turned on military matters, as exceedingly interesting. "The most eminent com-

manders passed in review before them; and the merits of each were very nicely scrutinized. They also sometimes discussed the different orders of battle." Upon one of these occasions both the king and the marshal agreed, in condemning the tactics laid down by the Chevalier Folard, who had taught the military art to the latter. "It would appear then," said the marshal, "that my friend Folard is wrong."—"But," replied the king, "he was not wrong in his prognostic respecting the Count de Saxe, when, in the defender of Crachnick, he foresaw the conqueror of Flanders."*

* Dr. Towers' Memoirs of Frederic III.

CHAPTER III.

FREDERIC'S LETTER OF INVITATION TO VOLTAIRE. — BACULARD D'ARNAUD. — VOLTAIRE'S RECEPTION AT POTSDAM, AND HIS SITUATION THERE. — JEALOUSY OF THE OTHER MEN OF LETTERS AGAINST HIM: — MAUPERTUIS, LA METTRIE, D'ARGENS, POËLLNITZ, ALGAROTTI, D'ARGET. — COMMENCEMENT OF FREDERIC'S QUARRELS WITH VOLTAIRE. — VOLTAIRE IN A LAW-SUIT. — SARCASMS REPORTED TO FREDERIC. — MAUPERTUIS'S CONTROVERSY WITH KOENIG. — VOLTAIRE'S "DOCTOR AKAKIA:" — HIS SUBSEQUENT CONDUCT, AND THE KING'S ANGER AGAINST HIM: — HE LEAVES POTSDAM: — HIS ARRIVAL AT FRANKFORT, AND ARREST THERE, &c.

In the month of June 1750, Voltaire arrived at Potsdam. The death of Madame du Chatelet, and the unceasing malevolence of the Cabal at Paris, who were bent upon raising the fame of Crebillon as a dramatic poet, at the expense of Voltaire, led him to wish for a change of scene. While justice also was thus denied to him in his own country, the King of Prussia never ceased his affectionate invitations to him.* One of his letters, written at the time when it was still doubtful, whether Voltaire would undertake the journey to Berlin, or not, concludes with this

* Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire.

passage: —"You are like the white elephant, for which the King of Persia and the Great Mogul make war; and the possession of which, when they are sufficiently happy to have obtained possession of it, forms one of their titles. If you come here, you will see at the head of mine, *Frederic by the Grace of God, King of Prussia, Elector of Brandenburgh, Possessor of Voltaire, &c. &c.*"*

Flattery could go no farther than this, and yet it appears doubtful whether, even this adulation would have persuaded Voltaire to quit the delights of Paris, had not another circumstance occurred to induce him to take the long-expected step. Baculard D'Arnaud†, a young author of merit, had been recommended to Frederic by Voltaire. The king was charmed with

* Supplement aux Œuvres posthumes de Frederic II.

† Baculard D'Arnaud was descended from a noble family of the Comté Venaissin. He early displayed talents for literature, and was distinguished by the notice of Voltaire. After his departure from Potsdam, he principally lived at Paris; where he finally died, in the year 1805, at the age of eighty-eight. He wrote a great deal; but most of his works are now forgotten. His best productions are those entitled, "Epreuves du Sentiment," and "Delassements de l'Homme sensible," and his successful tragedy, "Le Comte de Comminges." He also turned the Lamentations of Jeremiah into sacred odes, which went through several editions. It is of him that J. J. Rousseau said, "Most of our authors write with their heads and their hands, but Monsieur d'Arnaud writes with his heart." — Biographie Universelle.

the talent and agreeableness of D'Arnaud, who addressed complimentary verses and epistles to his majesty. To one of these Frederic answered in verse, in a most exaggerated style of praise; which concluded with the following lines, in which an allusion is also made to Voltaire: —

" Deja sans etre temeraire,
Prenant votre vol jusqu' aux cieux,
Vous pouvez égaler Voltaire,
Et pres de Virgile et d'Homère
Jouir de vos succès heureux.
Déjà l'Apollon de la France
S'achemine à sa décadence;
Venez briller à votre tour.
Elevez vous, s'il brille encore,
Ainsi le couchant d'un beau jour
Promet une plus belle Aurore!

These verses were sent to Thiriot, the literary correspondent of the King of Prussia at Paris. They were shown by him to Voltaire, who was in bed when he received them. " L'Aurore de D'Arnaud!" cried he, jumping out of bed, furious, and in his shirt, " Voltaire *à son couchant.*" " Let Frederic meddle with governing, and not with judging me. I will go, — aye, that I will, and teach this king " que je ne me couche pas encore." Immediately after this scene he began his journey.*

The reception of Voltaire at Potsdam was all that he could possibly desire. He observes

* Vie de Frederic II.

himself, "To be lodged in the apartment, which had been that of the Marshal de Saxe*, to have at my disposal the king's cooks when I chose to dine in my own room, and his coachmen and horses when I wished to drive out, were the least favours conferred upon me. The king's suppers were very agreeable. Perhaps I deceive myself; but it certainly seems to me, that there was a great deal of cleverness shown at them. The king himself had much talent for conversation, and made others have it also; and the most extraordinary part of the thing was, that I have never known suppers, where so much freedom reigned. I worked two hours a day with the king, and corrected all his writings; never failing to praise, what there was of good in them, while I altered all that was bad. I gave reasons to him for all I did, in writing; which formed a sort of course of rhetoric and poetics for his use: he profited by it, his own genius serving him even better than my lessons. I had no court to make to any one, no visits to pay, no duties to fulfil; my life was entirely free; and I cannot conceive any thing more agreeable, than this sort of existence."† Voltaire also found,

* Voltaire's rooms at Potsdam were on the ground floor of the palace, immediately under those occupied by the king.

† Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

in the royal family of Prussia, persons fond of literature, and capable of appreciating his talents and merits. He wrote verses for the princesses; acted tragedy with them and their brothers; and, by giving them lessons of declamation, taught them still more to appreciate the beauties of French poetry.*

Voltaire says, that the King of Prussia, though he applied to him to correct his literary productions, really considered his own superior to those of Voltaire; but he thought that, for the sake of form, the sanction of the approval of a French academician was necessary. This opinion of Voltaire's would, however, appear, to have been merely dictated by the vindictive feelings he entertained towards Frederic, at the time he wrote it, and is in no way supported by facts. Indeed, instead of this being the case, it would seem, that Frederic was fully sensible of his own inferiority; which was one of the principal reasons, that led him to use so much persuasion and so much flattery, in his endeavours to attract Voltaire to Berlin. Had he been as vain of his own poetry, as the latter represents, he never would have suffered Voltaire's numerous corrections, so patiently as he did; nor would the latter have ventured to make them. There still exists, in the library

* Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire.

of the new palace of Sans Souci, a copy of the miscellaneous works of Frederic, of which the margin is covered with the manuscript remarks of Voltaire; and they certainly do not spare the royal author, whenever he is in fault.*

The talents of Voltaire, his brilliant conversation, and the literary assistance he afforded to the King of Prussia, all contributed to increase the anxiety of that monarch, to fix his celebrated guest in his palace for the rest of his life. To this Voltaire at first made considerable opposition. But the flattery, the almost adoration, offered to him by Frederic, who, upon one occasion, according to Voltaire's own account, went so far in a transport of enthusiasm at his talents, as to kiss his hand, touched the heart, or turned

* It is the edition of the poems of Frederic in three volumes quarto, entitled, "Des Œuvres melées du philosophe de Sans Souci, imprimées au haut du Donjon, avec privilege d'Apollon." Only the second and third volumes are marked with Voltaire's notes. One of his corrections, which may give a notion of the style of the others, is as follows. In one of his "Epitres familiers," Frederic makes use of the word *plats* several times, in the course of a few lines. Voltaire draws a line under the word whenever it occurs, and then puts in the margin, "Plats — plats — plats — voila assez de plats pour un bon souper!" To make up for the freedom of such marginal annotations as these, great praise of the royal author occasionally appears. At the end of one of Frederic's letters in the same book, we find the following words in Voltaire's handwriting: — "Que d'esprit, de graces, d'imagination. Qu'il est doux de vivre aux pieds d'un tel homme!"

the head of the author. He could no longer resist the entreaties of his royal friend with his own arguments; but he put into his hands a letter he had just received from his niece, Madame Denis, at Paris; in which she urged him most strongly, not to bind himself to the service of the King of Prussia.* Frederic returned the following remarkable answer to the arguments of Madame Denis:—"I have read the letter, which your niece has written to you from Paris. The affection she has for you ensures to her my esteem. If I were Madame Denis, I should think as she does; but being the person I am, I must hold a different opinion. I should be in despair to be the cause of misery, even to my enemy: judge, then, if I could consent to be the cause of injury to a man whom I esteem, whom I love, and who sacrifices to me his country, and all that human nature holds most dear? No, my dear Voltaire, if I could foresee that your change of country would turn, the least in the world, to your disadvantage, I should be the first person to dissuade you from it. Yes, I should prefer your happiness, even to the extreme pleasure I derive from your society. But you are a philosopher, and I am one also. What then is more natural, more simple, or more in the order of things, than that philoso-

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

phers, made to live together, united by the same studies, the same tastes, and a similar way of thinking, should give themselves the satisfaction of one another's society. I respect you as my master in eloquence and knowledge; I love you as a virtuous friend. What slavery, what misfortunes, what change, what inconstancy of fortune are to be feared for you in a country, where you are esteemed as much as in your own, and where you live with a grateful friend? I have not the foolish presumption to believe, that Berlin is equal to Paris. If riches, grandeur, magnificence, are what make a town agreeable, we must yield to Paris. I know, and I allow, that the place in the whole world, where good taste is the most generally spread through all classes, is Paris. But do not you carry this good taste with you, wherever you are? We have powers sufficient to applaud you; and with regard to our affection for you, we will not yield to any place. I respected the friendship which united you to Madame du Chatelet*;

* Voltaire had previously refused the invitations of Frederic to settle at Potsdam, in consequence of his attachment to Madame du Chatelet, in whose society, either at Cirey, (her country house,) Paris, or Luneville, he passed the greater part of his time. Madame du Chatelet had died, at the age of forty-four, Sept. 10, 1749, six days after being brought to bed of a daughter. She was a woman of science and talent, and possessed of considerable personal beauty; but abandoned in her conduct, and gross in her

same arts, and the same talents. They communicated to one another their respective works. The Prussian monarch composed at this time his History of Brandenburgh; and the French author wrote his Age of Lewis the Fourteenth, having brought with him all his materials. His days thus passed happily in a repose, which was only animated by agreeable occupations. Nothing, indeed, could be more delightful than this way of life, or more honourable to philosophy and literature."*

This repose, however, was not destined to be of long duration. The jealousy of the other men of letters, with whom Frederic had filled his court, caused the first differences of the two friends, which were afterwards widened into a rupture, by their own respective tempers and characters. It may, perhaps, be as well here, before we come to treat of these literary quarrels, to give a short sketch of those persons, who, at this time, together with Voltaire, formed the habitual society of the King of Prussia. Of these, Chasot and Baculard d'Arnaud have been already mentioned. The others were Maupertuis, La Mettrie, D'Argens, Poëllnitz, Algarotti, and D'Arget.

Maupertuis was the president of the Royal Academy of Berlin, to which situation he had

* Commentaire Historique sur les Œuvres de l'Auteur de la Henriade.

been appointed, in consequence of his celebrity as a philosopher, and of the recommendations of Voltaire; with whom, and with Madame du Chatelet, he had passed much time at Cirey. He appears to have been a man of talent; but whose inordinate and ill-directed ambition led him into absurd theories in science, which he qualified with the name of discoveries, in order to attract a greater share of the public attention. With such a propensity, he was peculiarly unlucky in coming into collision with Voltaire, whose surprising talent for satire enabled him, to hold up Maupertuis to the ridicule of Europe. Vexation at the declension of his fame, and the diminution of his favour with Frederic, (for though the latter took his part against Voltaire, he never, after his absurdities had been pointed out by that author, paid much attention to him,) brought on a disease of languor, of which he died in 1759. For some years previous to his death, he had become fully sensible of the errors, into which he had fallen in the earlier parts of his life with regard to religion, and had embraced, with sincerity, the principles and doctrines of christianity.*

La Mettrie was a French physician, of bad character, but of some talent. He had written

* Biographie Universelle.

virulently against his brothers in medicine at Paris; and was, in consequence, obliged to fly his country. He then settled in Holland, from whence his books, in favour of materialism, caused him to be banished. He finally retired to Berlin, where Frederic, hearing of his destitute condition, made him his reader. He was, according to Voltaire, *the most frank atheist in Europe;* but gay, agreeable, and half mad. La Mettrie died, after dining with Lord Tyrconnel, the envoy from France at Berlin; where he eat so enormously of a pie stuffed with truffles, that an indigestion was the consequence, which carried him off in twenty-four hours. Though Frederic condescended to write his funeral oration, and obliged his Academy to listen to it, La Mettrie appears to have been one of the most unworthy companions or intimates he ever made choice of.*

The Marquis d'Argens was the eldest son of the *Procureur General* of the parliament of Aix. He had refused, in his youth, to adopt the profession of the law, which his father wished to persuade him to, and entered, instead, into a regiment of marines. He became a knight of Malta; and after leading a wandering and somewhat disreputable life, of which he gives us

* Biographie Universelle. — Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

an account in his early Memoirs of himself*, and for which he was disinherited by his father, he fixed himself in Holland, where he principally supported himself by his publications.† Of these the most popular was, his "Lettres Juives," which placed his name among those of the philosophical writers of the age. Frederic had endeavoured to attach him to his service, while he was yet only Prince of Prussia, and wrote to him with this view. D'Argens, however, at that time declined the offer, alleging, as a reason, that being a tall and well-made man, he could not venture to place himself within the reach of Frederic William, and his battalions of guards.

Some years afterwards Frederic, being then king, renewed the offer with more success; and D'Argens accepted the place of chamberlain at the court of Potsdam.‡ He was always of the king's habitual society; and his admiration and love for his royal master was excessive. Unfortunately for himself, though possessed of considerable abilities, his simplicity of mind upon many points, and his weaknesses of character, rendered him very susceptible of ridicule. These circumstances encouraged Frederic, upon

* Mémoires de Monsieur le Marquis d'Argens, avec quelques lettres sur divers sujets. —*A Londres au depens de la Compagnie.* MDCCXXXV.

† Mémoires de M. le Marquis d'Argens.

‡ Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

many occasions to make him his *butt;* a fate which his long services and attachment should have exempted him from. The consequence was, that towards the end of their intimacy, as the king pushed his raillery farther and farther, and the marquis, tired out, became less enduring of it, quarrels between the two friends were frequent.

The marquis was also anxious to pass the evening of his days in his own country, to which he was peculiarly attached, from the tender affection which subsisted between himself and his brother, the president d'Eguilles. He could not, however, venture to ask for his dismissal from Frederic, though he had made the agreement when he entered his service, that he should be permitted to retire at the age of seventy; and that period of his life was some time passed. All he could bring himself to request was, a leave of absence for six months, which was granted with difficulty. He passed this time with his brother in Provence, and was returning with a heavy heart towards Prussia, when he was taken very ill by the way at Bourg-en-Bresse. Here his wife* was so occupied with the care of her husband, that she neglected

* D'Argens had married Mademoiselle Cochois, an actress of Berlin, who, in spite of her origin, made him an attached and excellent wife; and is described also, as having been a sensible and agreeable, though ugly, woman.

to write to the King of Prussia, to explain the causes of their non-arrival at Berlin. Frederic, after waiting some time for intelligence respecting D'Argens, became convinced he had deceived him, and abandoned his service. Under this impression he, in great anger, struck his name out of the list of pensions. When this step reached the ears of D'Argens, he was equally furious at the king's ingratitude, and returned immediately to Provence, where he died in 1771; after having, contrary to what might have been expected from the general tenor of his life and writings, given proofs of a return to christian sentiments.* The conduct of Frederic, in treating an ancient servant with such harshness and indignity upon mere suspicions, was inexcusable; nor can we think it at all expiated, by the order he gave some years afterwards, when he heard of the death of the marquis, to erect a marble monument in the church at Eguilles to his memory.

The Baron de Poëllnitz was a Prussian adventurer, who has left several volumes of Memoirs and Letters, which made some noise at the time they were published, but are now forgotten. He had changed his religion several times, and always with the intention of benefiting his temporal interests.† Poëllnitz was born to some fortune, which he soon wasted, and afterwards

* Biographie Universelle. † Ibid.

lived, during the course of his long life, by his wits; that is to say, by obtaining money by any means in his power, even those that were the least honourable. He had visited and lived in every court of Europe, and had obtained money or employments at different times, from almost all the sovereigns of them.* Implicated in the conspiracy of the Duchess du Maine and Cellamare, against the Regent Duke of Orleans, he was forced to fly from Paris, and narrowly escaped punishment. He finally settled himself at Berlin, where Frederic made him his chamberlain, and admitted him into his society. Here he occupied a mixed station between a buffoon and a butt; and Frederic was frequently not able to resist showing his contempt for his character, though he was at the same time amused by him.†

The manner, in which Poëllnitz was induced to change his religion for the last time is sufficiently curious, and shows the little consideration with which the king treated him. One day the baron was complaining to Frederic of his poverty, a subject upon which he was very eloquent; when the latter, after listening with apparent interest, said to him, with an air of kindness, "I should very much like to be of use to you; but what can I do. You know I

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† Biographie Universelle.

can only just manage, by means of economy, to find funds for what I am obliged to do, in consequence of the poverty of my territories. If you were still a catholic, I could give you a canonry: every now and then I have a good one falls vacant. At this moment, indeed, there is one unfilled, and I do not know who to give it to: you may conceive I had much rather you had it, than many others. But you are now of the reformed religion; that is to say, of the one which is unhappily the poorest of all, and which, therefore, offers me no means of being of use to you — a circumstance which, I assure you, I much regret." The baron was deceived by the air of frankness, with which the king uttered these words; and trusting implicitly to what he heard, he proceeded to act accordingly. That very evening he made his abjuration in form; and the next morning came to announce to Frederic, that he had followed his advice, and that he now hoped to receive the benefice, which his majesty had led him to expect. "I am exceedingly sorry," replied the king, with much gravity, "but I have this very morning given away the canonry I spoke to you about. This is a sad disappointment to me; but how could I imagine that you were so ready again to change your religion? What can I now do? Ah! I remember, that I have still got a situation of rabbi to appoint to. Become a Jew, and I pro-

mise it to you." The vexation and disappointment of Poëllnitz, when he found he had been deceived, may be imagined; but he, nevertheless, continued a Roman catholic for the rest of his life.*

Among the friends and companions of Frederic, at this time, one of the most accomplished was the Italian, Algarotti. Born at Venice, of wealthy parents, who gave him a careful education, he early devoted himself to the pursuit of literature and the sciences. At the age of twenty-one, he published his "Newtonianismo per le Dame;" in which he endeavoured to explain the Newtonian system of philosophy, in a manner, which might be easy of comprehension to women, and people of the world. This work had great success, and was translated into various languages. He was afterwards very successful in his productions of Italian poetry, as well as in various dissertations upon literary and scientific subjects.† Frederic had early become acquainted with him; and he had visited that sovereign, while only prince royal, at Rheinsberg. He afterwards settled himself for some years at Potsdam, where Frederic appointed him one of his chamberlains, and conferred on him the title of count, and the order of merit.

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† Biographie Universelle.

The King of Prussia appears to have treated him with invariable kindness, and was accustomed to call him his "dear *swan* of Italy." The amiable manners, great sweetness of disposition, and brilliant talents of Algarotti, caused him to be universally liked and esteemed. His lungs becoming affected by the severe climate of Germany, he returned to his native land; and, finally, died at Pisa, in 1764, at the age of fifty-two. Frederic erected a monument to his memory in the Campo Santo at Pisa, on which was engraved, at the desire of Algarotti, these words, "Hic jacet Fr. Algarottus non omnis." To this inscription the King of Prussia requested permission to add, "Algarotto, Ovidii æmulo, Neutoni discipulo, Fridericus Rex." Those who had the care of executing the monarch's intentions, only permitted themselves to change the last of these words, for which they very properly substituted the epithet of *Magnus*.

D'Arget, who was one of Frederic's readers or secretaries, was also admitted to the suppers of Sans Souci. He seems to have enjoyed a considerable share of the king's favour, whose service he only quitted, in consequence of his ill-health. He returned to his native country, France; from whence he always kept up a correspondence with his old master.* He appears

* Supplement aux Œuvres posthumes de Frederic II.

to have been a man of popular manners, and agreeable conversation; but is principally known in consequence of his connection with Frederic, and the singular manner in which he became attached to that sovereign. In the second war of Silesia, the Marquis de Valori, who was French minister at the court of Berlin, accompanied Frederic in his campaigns. Upon a certain occasion, the house where he lodged was attacked by the Austrian pandours, who were very near taking Valori prisoner. He was obliged to jump out of the window, as they entered the room; but would, probably, not have escaped, had it not been for the presence of mind of his secretary D'Arget, who remained behind, and gave himself out as the envoy. Frederic was so much pleased with the account he heard of D'Arget's conduct, that he requested Valori to give him up to him; and attached him to his own service. Frederic was accustomed to laugh much at the adventure, and at the anxiety of the Austrians to obtain possession of Valori, whom, he said, he supposed they considered, as the Palladium of the Austrian success.* Hence arose his heroi-comic poem entitled the Palladium, of which D'Arget is the hero.

It is related of Bossuet, that when he was

* Vie de Frederic II.

first made Bishop of Meaux, he found his chapter composed of heavy stupid men, who, however, lived in amity and peace together. Disgusted with their dulness, he determined, as their places fell vacant, to fill them up with men of abilities; and thus, by degrees, he collected the cleverest chapter in France. Bitterly, however, did he rue his success, for to the former tranquillity, succeeded those interminable jealousies and rivalries, which peculiarly infest the society of those, who have pretensions to talent: and he lived to regret the chapter he had before despised. Thus it was with the society of Frederic: no sooner had he collected around him, all that Europe could furnish of men the most eminent in talent, than his court became the focus of the lowest intrigues and jealousies; and it is to some of these, that we must attribute the first coolness, which arose between Voltaire and his royal friend.

The literary men, whom Frederic had invited to Potsdam, and who had been settled there before the arrival of Voltaire, were, as has been before mentioned, jealous of the new comer; and the more so, on account of the excessive superiority of his talents. At the head of these was Maupertuis, whose inordinate vanity rendered him peculiarly envious of any celebrity but his own. These persons were perpetually endeavouring to injure Voltaire in the mind of

Frederic, to whom they reported any thing disparaging of the king or of his poetry, which, in moments of bad humour, fell from the irritable poet.* Thus, after the death of La Mettrie, Maupertuis told the king, that Voltaire had said, that the place of *atheist to his majesty* was vacant. "This calumny," observes Voltaire, "had no effect;" but he added, "that I thought the king wrote bad verses; and this was more successful."†

In addition to these intrigues against him on the part of others, Voltaire did himself harm, by his unworthy jealousy of Baculard d'Arnaud. It may be remembered, that it was a feeling of anger, at the praise bestowed by Frederic upon the poetry of Arnaud, which mainly determined Voltaire to come to Potsdam; and, arriving as he did, with such dispositions, it was not likely, that he and his former disciple should continue good friends. On the other hand, Arnaud, who found his favour considerably diminished since the arrival of Voltaire, could not regard the author of this decline of his influence, with any kindly feelings. Their reciprocal dislike manifested itself in various bickerings and quarrels. In one of these, which took place before Frederic, they respectively so far forgot the pre-

* Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire.

† Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

sence of the king, as to break out into violent abuse of one another.* The conclusion of this contest was, the departure of Arnaud from Potsdam, which was brought about by the endeavours of Voltaire. But though the latter was enabled to disgrace his rival, his very victory, and the trouble and uneasiness it had caused to the king, occasioned a sensible diminution of his own favour.†

Other circumstances also occurred, which displeased the king, and added to his causes of complaint against his apparent favourite. Frederic, as it is well known, was economical, and so was also Voltaire; and this circumstance in their respective characters occasioned additional differences between them. Among the advantages which were to accrue to Voltaire, in consequence of his residence in the palace of the King of Prussia, was the being supplied with tea, coffee, chocolate, sugar, &c. Those, however, whose duty it was to furnish him with these articles, usually sent him very bad ones. Voltaire complained of this to the king, who promised to have it remedied. The evil, however, continuing, and Voltaire again complaining, the king, in a jocose tone, told him, that as he saw that his anxiety respecting these trifles

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

diverted his mind from the sublime studies in which he was engaged, he would give orders that he should no longer be troubled with them; and accordingly ordered these perquisites to be suppressed.* The conclusion which the king thus unexpectedly came to, astonished and enraged the poet; and determined him to make up, by his own contrivances, for the advantages, of which he had been deprived. With this view, he was accustomed to sell the allowance of wax candles, which was still made to him, and to supply their place by the following ingenious manœuvre. While passing the evenings with the king in his apartment, he was accustomed to take opportunities of retiring to his own room; and each time that he did so, he armed himself with one of the large wax candles, which lighted the king's rooms, which he never brought back with him.†

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlín.

† The editor of the "Mémoires sur Voltaire, par Wagneres et Longchamp" enters, in a long note, into much abuse of Thiebault and his "Souvenirs," from whence the anecdote in the text is taken; and contests the truth of his relations, especially in this instance. If the author of the note had contented himself with reprobating the style, taste, and manner of arrangement of Thiebault, no difference of opinion could have existed; but when, without offering either facts or arguments in support of his decision, he denies the truth of anecdotes, which no one could have had such accurate means of knowing as the relater of them, it is impossible not to perceive, that some hidden cause for his unreasonable disparagement of Thiebault, which appears neither founded in reason nor justice, must exist.

This conduct could not please Frederic; and a law-suit, which Voltaire was obliged to undertake against a Jew, who had cheated him, but which his enemies about the King of Prussia persuaded the latter was a transaction discreditable to Voltaire, exasperated still more his feelings. Voltaire had charged a Jew, of the name of Herscheld, to buy for him, at Leipsick, certain letters of exchange to the amount of ten thousand francs. Herscheld left in Voltaire's hands, as security, certain diamonds; which, though in his possession, belonged to Chasot, one of Frederic's friends, of whom mention has already been made, who had received them from the Duchess of Mecklenburg, whose lover he had been. After some time, Voltaire, discovering that the diamonds were not the property of the Jew, determined not to employ him; and wrote to him to that effect. The Jew, upon this, demanded an exorbitant sum for his trouble. Voltaire refused to pay him; and Herscheld, in return, declined receiving back the diamonds, alleging that Voltaire had substituted smaller ones of less value, for those which he had delivered over to him. The cause upon this came into the courts of law; and the cabal, who were hostile to Voltaire, persuaded the King of Prussia, that the French poet's conduct had been extremely dishonest; and prevailed upon

the king, to order him not to appear at Potsdam, till he could justify himself.*

It was on occasion of this temporary disgrace, that Frederic, in a letter to D'Arget, thus expresses himself: — "Voltaire has conducted himself like a blackguard, and a consummate rascal. I have talked to him as he deserved. He is a sad fellow; and I am quite ashamed for human abilities, that a man who has so much of them, should be so full of wickedness." † Voltaire's cause with Herscheld lasted for some months; after which judgment was given in favour of the former, who was entirely exonerated from even the slightest suspicion of having acted wrong, to the great disappointment of Maupertuis and others. He was, in appearance, restored to favour; but the feelings of Frederic and Voltaire towards each other must have been very different from those, with which they met when the latter first came to Potsdam.

It was also reported to Voltaire, that Frederic, when asked by La Mettrie why he continued to extend his favour to him, had replied, ‡ "Wait a little. I mean to suck the orange, and to throw

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Dated April 1752. — Supplement aux Œuvres posthumes de Frederic II.

‡ "Laissez faire. On presse l'orange, et on la jette, quand on avalé le jus."

away the rind." This remark, "worthy," as Voltaire says, "of Dionysius of Syracuse," was reported to the object of it; and from this time he began to revenge himself upon the king, by sarcasms of various kinds.* These, through the industry of Maupertuis, were all conveyed to that monarch; and, turning as they principally did upon ridicule of his compositions, added much to his bitterness against the author of them.† Thus, when the General Manstein requested Voltaire to look over and correct his Memoirs, the latter replied, "I have so much dirty linen of the king's to wash, that yours must wait." Again, on receiving a packet of the king's verses, he threw it on the table, and said, with much ill-humour, "That man is Cæsar and the Abbé Cotin ‡ united." § Several epigrams of the bitterest kind were also written by Frederic and Voltaire upon each other; which it was always contrived by those persons, who wished to render the breach between them

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

† Commentaire Historique sur les Œuvres de l'Auteur de la Henriade.

‡ Cotin was the miserable French poetaster, satirized by Boileau: —

"Et que sert à Cotin la raison qui lui crie,
N'ecris plus, gueris-toi d'une vaine furie."

§ Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire.

so wide as to be irreparable, should reach the eyes or ears of the person lampooned.*

Upon one occasion, when Frederic thought he had more reason than usual to be displeased with Voltaire, he wrote to him a reproachful note, which concluded with these severe words: "You have a heart a hundred times more horrible, than your genius is beautiful." He sent this note from his own apartment to that of Voltaire, by a page. When Voltaire had read it, his rage knew no bounds. He applied to the king every odious epithet he could think of; at the same time making the most virulent charges against him. All this, with a loud and angry voice, while striding about his room, and showing symptoms of extreme agitation. The poor page, who was waiting for his answer, was frightened beyond measure, and endeavoured to arrest his course, by saying to him; "Sir, recollect yourself, and reflect that he is king; that you are in his house; and that I, who listen to you, am in his service." These words had an instantaneous effect upon Voltaire, though without apparently calming his violence; but he seized the page by the arm, and cried out. "It is you, sir, that I take as the judge between him and me. I defy you to discover

* Vie de Frederic II.

any fault I have committed towards him. I have committed one, it is true, and it is an irreparable one; it is that of having taught him to make verses better than I can myself. Go, sir, and take him this answer!"

The page went up stairs again to the king, whom he found walking about his room, and waiting impatiently for the answer. "Have you delivered my note?" cried the king, as soon as he saw him. "Yes, sire." — "Did you deliver it to M. de Voltaire himself?"—"Yes, sire." —"Did he read it before you?"—"Yes, sire." —"What did he say and do, after having read it?" To this question the terrified page returned no answer. "I ask you what M. de Voltaire said, when he had read my note?" Still the page continued silent. "Take care of yourself, sir," continued the angry monarch; "I am determined to know what he said and did. There, speak, I command you." The page, now more frightened than ever, began to tell his tale, stopping between almost every word, and not daring to lift his eyes to the king; who, as the relation proceeded, became every instant more agitated and more angry. But the exaggerated compliments to his own verses, which concluded the communication, restored him at once to calmness; and, when the page had finished, he only shrugged his shoulders, and said, "He is cer-

tainly mad!" * Similar examples of Voltaire's insolence towards Frederic might be multiplied, but enough has been said to prove how great were the liberties he permitted to himself, in his remarks upon that sovereign.

This state of excitement between the King of Prussia and his former favourite, could not possibly go on for any length of time, without coming to an open rupture. It was, however, reserved for Maupertuis, who had perhaps been the first cause of their differences, to be also the occasion of their final quarrel. The jealousy, which Maupertuis always had felt towards Voltaire, had been ripened into a still more acrimonious feeling, by the sarcastic remarks which Voltaire permitted himself to make upon the president of the Berlin Academy, as soon as he discovered how much he was his enemy. Thus, one evening, when they were returning together in one of the king's carriages from Sans Souci to Potsdam, Maupertuis, who had talked a good deal during the supper, remarked "What an agreeable evening we have had." — "I never passed a stupider!" was Voltaire's reply. Upon another occasion, Voltaire had been particularly brilliant, and, after supper, the whole party made a circle round him, and paid him compliments. Mau-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

pertuis alone remained silent, which made one of the party ask him why he looked so grave. "As for me," said Maupertuis, "I own, I thought it all very tiring." — "I dare say, my dear president, you did," replied Voltaire; "it is because you are yourself tiresome!" *

But Voltaire was not a man likely to confine himself to a war of conversation, and, accordingly, he only waited for an opportunity, to turn his adversary into ridicule, by means of a lampoon. This occasion soon presented itself. Maupertuis entered into a controversy with Kœnig, a geometrician of eminence, and librarian to the Princess of Orange at the Hague, respecting a discovery, which he alleged himself to have made; but which Kœnig asserted, and with reason, to have been originally made by Leibnitz. Kœnig, in support of what he advanced, quoted a copy of a letter of Leibnitz, which was in his possession. Maupertuis summoned him to produce the original, which Kœnig was unable to do. He had received the copy in question from the unfortunate Hienzi, who some years before had been beheaded at Berne, in consequence of his endeavours to deliver that canton from the tyranny of its senate. The letter of Leibnitz could not be found among the papers of Hienzi; and Maupertuis took occasion of this circum-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

stance to persuade the Academy at Berlin, whom he led as he pleased, to expel Kœnig from their society, as the forger of the letter in question; declaring him, at the same time, unworthy of the title of academician. The manifest injustice of this decision roused the anger of Voltaire, who, during his residence with Madame du Chatelet at Cirey, had known and liked Kœnig. He therefore openly took his part, and published several small pamphlets in his favour; in which justness of reasoning and good sense were mingled with the most pointed sarcasm.*

Maupertuis contrived to interest Frederic in his favour, by talking to him of the honour of his Academy; and Frederic, in consequence, obtained from Voltaire a promise, that he would publish nothing more against the Academy or its president. This promise Voltaire adhered to, till he conceived himself released from it by the conduct of Frederic, who could not himself resist writing epigrams, and other productions, to ridicule Maupertuis. Voltaire now determined to keep no farther measures with Maupertuis. The latter philosopher had, unfortunately for himself, just published a very singular book, in which, among other wild schemes and theories, he proposed to dissect the brains of

* Vie de Voltaire. — Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire. — Commentaire Historique.

Patagonian giants, in order to discover the nature of the soul; to build a town, where Latin should be the only language spoken; to dig a hole to the centre of the earth; and to cure maladies, and preserve life for several centuries, by covering the patients with an impervious plaster made of rosin.

The occasion was tempting, and Voltaire resolved to devote Maupertuis to eternal ridicule, by a work, which he entitled "The Diatribe of the Doctor Akakia, Physician to the Pope."* This satire, which was written in his most amusing manner, and which exposed, unpityingly, all the absurdities advanced by Maupertuis, he showed to various persons. Its existence soon became known to Frederic, who sent immediately for its author. A long interview was the consequence, in which Frederic persuaded Voltaire, by means of flatteries and cajoleries, to bring him the manuscript, and to permit him to burn it. Voltaire returned with his work, which he delivered to the king, saying at the same time, "Here, sire, is this innocent, who is doomed to perish for the public good. I deliver him to you, to command execution to be done upon him." Frederic requested Voltaire to read his satire to him, which the latter complied with; and the

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire. — Commentaire Historique.

king never ceased his praises and laughter, at the humour and wit of each sentence. When "The Diatribe" had been read through, it was thrown into the fire, with much solemnity, as a sacrifice to Vulcan; the king and Voltaire imitating at the same time, before the fire-place, the sacrificial dances of the ancients.*

Frederic now thought he had gained a victory, and that Maupertuis would be permitted to publish his singular reveries in peace. But the time was passed, when any real confidence subsisted between the Prussian monarch and Voltaire. The latter had kept a copy of "The Akakia;" and the former, fearful that such might have been the case, had sent particular orders to all the printers of Berlin not to print any work for Voltaire, unless they had the king's especial permission for it. Voltaire, however, contrived to get "The Akakia" printed, by mingling the sheets with those of a work, for the printing of which he had obtained the king's permission. The printer, deceived by this, made no objection; and when the two works were respectively completed, Voltaire separated them, and made presents of "The Diatribe" to his friends, taking care to send four copies into Holland.

As soon as Frederic heard of Voltaire's con-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

duct he became furious, had the edition seized, and commanded it to be burnt by the common hangman. This execution took place in the *Place des Gendarmes* at Berlin, in sight of Voltaire, who stood at a window, and cried out, when the smoke rose, " Look at the soul of Maupertuis, which escapes in smoke; and what black, thick, heavy smoke it is! At the same time, what a loss of wood! And then those four poor little deserters, who are travelling post, and escaping into Holland!" *

This proceeding of the King of Prussia's was one dictated by the anger of the moment, and, like most which proceed from a similar source, was a very foolish one. This public degradation of " The Diatribe" was unwarrantably severe, viewed as a punishment †; while, as a mode of finishing a literary controversy, it was ridiculous. It also finally prevented any farther intimacy, or any restoration of friendship, between the king and his guest. Of the extent of the anger of the King of Prussia at this moment against Voltaire, some notion may be formed, from the following note which he wrote to him respecting the printing of " The Akakia." " Your effron-

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† The punishment, indeed, was more severe than at first would appear, from the circumstance, that " The Diatribe of the Doctor Akakia" was the only book, which Frederic ever caused to be subjected to a similar indignity."

tery astonishes me. After what you have done, and which is as clear as the day, you persist in your denials, instead of acknowledging yourself culpable. Do not imagine that you can persuade people that white is black. When I appear not to see, it is that I do not choose to see; but if you go on with your present conduct, I will publish the whole transaction; and it will then be seen, that if the beauty of your works makes you worthy of having statues erected to you, the infamy of your conduct merits chains.

"P.S. The printer has been interrogated, and has declared every thing." *

To D'Arget, who was at Paris, Frederic also wrote thus upon the subject of Voltaire† :—"I am not surprised that people talk at Paris of the quarrel of our *beaux esprits*. Voltaire is the most mischievous madman I ever knew. He is only good to read. It is impossible for you to imagine the duplicities, the impositions, the infamies he practised here. I am quite indignant that so much talent and acquirement does not make men better. I took the part of Maupertuis, because he is a good sort of man,

* Supplement aux Œuvres posthumes de Frederic le Grand.

† The letter is dated Potsdam, April 1753, and was probably written immediately after the departure of Voltaire from the Prussian court.

and that the other had determined upon ruining him; but I did not lend myself to his revenge, in the way he would have wished. A little too much vanity had rendered him too sensitive of the manœuvres of this monkey, whom he ought to have despised, after having castigated him." *

That Voltaire was not behind the King of Prussia in the acrimony of his feelings, we have ample proof in the work he has left us, entitled his Memoirs; in which, whenever he speaks of Frederic, and he does so at almost every page, his pen is dipped in the bitterest gall.

Shortly after the burning of the Akakia, Voltaire, upon the pretext of his health and his affairs, demanded to be permitted to return to France. This request he accompanied with the restoration to the king, of the patent of his pension, of the key of chamberlain, and the cross of merit, which he was now accustomed with his intimates, to call "the disgraceful marks of his slavery." With these he sent the following well-turned and well-imagined lines:—

"Je les reçus avec tendresse,
Et je les rends avec douleur,
Comme un amant, dans sa jalouse ardeur,
Rend le portrait de sa maitresse." †

* Supplement aux Œuvres posthumes de Frederic le Grand.

† Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire.

This flattery he thought would occasion the success of his petition; but Frederic, who, perhaps, after all wished to keep him, refused to let him go; but sent him, in allusion to his complaints about his health, some bark, and advised him to try some mineral waters in Silesia, instead of the waters of Plombieres, which he had requested to be allowed to visit. He also returned to him the patent, the key, and the cross.

Voltaire, in despair, now demanded an audience, which was readily granted.* He was received with kindness, and obtained the leave of absence he desired; and was invited to supper. "I made, therefore," says Voltaire, "one more supper, after the manner of Damocles; after which I departed, with a promise of returning to the king, and with a firm determination never to see him again."† The final interview between Frederic and Voltaire took place on the parade at Potsdam, where the king was then occupied with his soldiers. One of the attendants announced him to his majesty, with these words:—"Sire, here is Monsieur de Voltaire, who is come to receive the orders of your majesty." Frederic turned to Voltaire, and said to him, "Monsieur de Voltaire, are

* Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire.

† Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

you still determined upon going?" — "Sire, affairs which I cannot neglect, and, above all, the state of my health, oblige me to it."—"In that case, sir, I wish you a good journey." Thus parted these two remarkable men, who were never destined to meet again.*

But the adventures of Frederic and Voltaire were, unhappily, by no means as yet concluded. From Potsdam, Voltaire proceeded to Leipsic, where he received a challenge from Maupertuis†, which only served to open a new subject for his pleasantries and sarcasms. From thence he went to the court of the Duchess of Saxe Gotha, "an excellent princess," as he observes, "who, fortunately, did not make verses."‡ After remaining a month at Gotha, he proceeded to Hesse Cassel, where the margrave, "a prince still farther removed from poetry than the Duchess of Gotha," had invited him to his court. Here he met the Baron de Poëllnitz, who was returning to Potsdam from a watering place he had been visiting, and was entirely ignorant of all that had taken place at that court during his absence. Poëllnitz always afterwards described Voltaire, as exhibiting ungovernable rage, when ever he spoke of Frederic. "Your king," said he- "has treated me unworthily; and you may tell

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire.

‡ Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

him, that I will never forget it. Yes, tell him, that I will revenge myself. Posterity shall know the whole transaction. He shall, himself, long repent of his conduct, when it is too late! Yes, I will be revenged: pray tell him so." *

It was such vindictive feelings as these, heightened as they afterwards were, by the scenes which took place at Frankfort, that dictated those malevolent pages in the memoirs of himself, which have been for so many years the arsenal, from whence all the topicks of abuse against the King of Prussia have been taken.

From Cassel, Voltaire proceeded to Frankfort, where his niece Madame Denis met him.† Unfortunately for him, he had inadvertently carried away from Potsdam, with his own books, a quarto volume of the King of Prussia's poetry, which was printed, but not published; and which had been confided to him, for the purpose of correction at his leisure.‡ Frederic expected, when Voltaire went away, that he would have returned it to him; but the latter forgot to do so.§ This was too fair an opportunity, for the malevolence of Maupertuis to work

* Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

† Condorcet, Vie de Voltaire. — Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

‡ Commentaire Historique sur les Œuvres de l'Auteur de la Henriade.

§ Thiebault, Souvenirs de Vingt Ans de Séjour à Berlin.

upon, to be omitted. He persuaded the king, that Voltaire could only have carried the volume of poetry away with some bad purpose; either to publish it surreptitiously, or with unfriendly commentaries; or perhaps even with notes explanatory of the parts, which were written by him, as contra-distinguished from those, which were really the productions of the royal author. These insinuations had so great an effect upon the king's mind, that he determined upon a most unwise and unfair step, namely, that of sending orders to his residents at Frankfort, to arrest Voltaire upon his arrival in that town, and not to release him, till he had given up the brevet of his pension, the key of chamberlain, the cross of merit, and, above all, the volume of the king's poetry. *

The agents of the King of Prussia at Frankfort, into whose hands the unhappy poet now fell, were two Germans of the name of Freitag and Schmitt, neither of them persons of very good character; and who seem to have exceeded their instructions, at least in the rigorous manner, in which they executed them. The history of the whole transaction cannot possibly be more amusingly given, than in the words of Voltaire himself. "Upon my arrival," says he, "they signified to me, that I must not stir from

* Dr. Towers' Memoirs of Frederic III.

Frankfort, till I had restored the precious effects belonging to his majesty, which I had carried away with me. 'Alas! gentlemen, I carry nothing away from that country I assure you; not even the least regret. What, then, are the jewels of the crown of Brandenburgh, which you re-demand from me.' *C'etre, Monsir,*' answered Freitag, '*l'œuvre de poëshie du roi mon gracieux maître.*'—'Oh!' replied I, 'I will restore to him most readily both his prose and his verse, though I have more claims than one upon the work. His majesty gave me a copy, beautifully bound; but, unhappily, this book is still at Leipsic with my other effects.' Upon this, Freitag proposed to me to remain at Frankfort, till the treasure from Leipsic arrived; and he signed for me the following pretty memorandum; '*Monsir, sitôt le gros ballot de Leipsick sera ici, où est l'œuvre de poëshie du roi mon maître, que sa majesté demande, et l'œuvre de poëshie rendu à moi, vous pourrez parter ou vous peraitra bon. A Francfort;* 1 *de Juin* 1753. *Freitag, résident du roi mon maître.*' I wrote at the bottom of the memorandum, *Bon pour l'œuvre de poëshie du roi votre maître;*' with which the resident was much satisfied. On the 17th of June, arrived the great package of *poëshies.* I faithfully delivered up this sacred deposit; and then thought that I might take my departure, without asking permission of any

crowned head. But at the very instant when I was setting off, I was arrested; — I, my secretary, and my servants. My niece was also arrested; and four soldiers dragged her through the mud of the streets, to Schmitt. They stuffed us both into a sort of small inn, at the door of which were placed twelve soldiers; four others were placed in my room; four in a garret, to which my niece had been conducted; four in a sort of cock-loft open to all the winds of heaven, in which they made my secretary sleep upon straw. My niece had, it is true, a small bed; but the four soldiers in her room, with fixed bayonets, supplied the place of curtains and chambermaids. We were kept in this manner twelve days prisoners of war, and we were obliged to pay one hundred and forty crowns each day. Schmitt had taken possession of my effects, which were at length restored to me lighter by half. It was impossible to pay dearer for the *Œuvre de poëshie du Roi de Prusse*. I lost about as much, as he had expended in getting me to Potsdam, and in taking lessons of me; so parting we were quits."*

It does not appear exactly, what was the cause of this last outrage committed upon Voltaire and his niece, by the king of Prussia's residents.

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

In his own Memoirs Voltaire assigns no reasons fo it. In the "Commentaire Historique" he hints something about letters of exchange, which it was thought, without reason, he had carried away with him from Potsdam. And in Chaudon's Memoirs, of him, it is said, that he attempted to make his escape, while waiting for the arrival of the *Œuvre de Poëshie;* but was pursued and brought back; and treated, in consequence, with this extreme rigour. It would however appear the most probable solution of the enigma, to suppose, that Freitag and Schmitt thought, as he was evidently a person out of favour with their sovereign, that they might exceed their orders; and thus extract money from him for their own profit. However this may be, their violences were afterwards disowned by the King of Prussia, who was probably ashamed of the ridicule, which his anger had brought upon himself.

Voltaire hastened to put the Rhine between himself and the Prussian monarch; and retired to Plombieres. For two years from this time all commerce between these two extraordinary men was broken off; and it would hardly seem to have been possible, that it could ever have been renewed. But though all real affection between them was at an end, a sort of sympathetic attraction, which nothing could eradicate, drew them

together. In 1755, Frederic wrote to Voltaire, and sent him an opera he had just composed. Voltaire answered respectfully; and from this moment their correspondence continued, till the death of the latter.*

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.—Œuvres de Voltaire.

CHAPTER IV.

EMBASSY TO FREDERIC FROM THE KHAN OF THE CRIMEA.— HIS DIFFERENCES WITH RUSSIA: — HIS RELATIONS WITH ENGLAND: — HE IS OFFERED THE SOVEREIGNTY OF CORSICA. — IMPRISONMENT OF BARON TRENCK. — FREDERIC VISITS HOLLAND. — TREATY BETWEEN ENGLAND AND RUSSIA. — RUSSIA AND AUSTRIA EXCITE HOSTILITY AGAINST FREDERIC. — REASONS OF MARIA THERESA FOR VENTURING ON THE SEVEN YEARS' WAR. — CHARACTER OF THE EMPEROR FRANCIS. — DEVELOPMENT OF THE HOSTILE VIEWS OF AUSTRIA, RUSSIA, AND SAXONY AGAINST FREDERIC. — FREDERIC ACQUIRES A KNOWLEDGE OF THE PLANS OF HIS ENEMIES. — HE DECIDES UPON THE INVASION OF SAXONY.

THE fame of the great qualities of Frederic, which had now spread far and wide, occasioned his receiving about this time a singular embassy. The Khan of the Crimea, in 1750, sent to Berlin an ambassador, named Mustapha, who was charged to assure the Prussian monarch of his master's anxiety for his friendship, and willingness to assist him by any means in his power. Frederic was most gracious to the Mussulman envoy; and, after entertaining him splendidly, sent him away much contented with his reception.*

* Vie de Frederic II.

During the year 1753, Frederic was much occupied, as he had indeed been ever since the year 1750, in negotiations, to prevent the Archduke Joseph from being elected King of the Romans. The election was urged by the court of Vienna, in concert with that of England.* Frederic announced his objections to the measure in a circular letter, which he addressed to the different electors. These consisted in citations from the laws of the empire, and reasonings founded upon them, and applied to the circumstances of the time; but his real objection consisted, in his anxiety to prevent the farther aggrandizement of the house of Austria. The activity and ability of the King of Prussia, supported as they were by the influence of the court of France, succeeded in delaying the election of a King of the Romans; but the opposition raised by him upon this occasion, added greatly to the bitterness of feeling against Prussia, entertained by the imperial family, and assisted in laying the foundation of the long and bloody struggle, which afterwards took place.†

Frederic also found himself involved in differences with a power as formidable to him as Austria, namely Russia. He had permitted himself some sarcastic remarks upon the habits and propensities of the Empress Elizabeth, which

* Vie de Frederic II.

† Dr. Towers' Memoirs of Frederic III.

made that sovereign his personal enemy. As, however, the ministers of the czarina, beginning with the Chancellor Bestuchew, were in the highest degree venal, the King of Prussia was enabled for the present to avert the storm, which was gathering in that quarter. But the bad intentions continued, though as yet they did not lead to action.

Nor were the relations of the Prussian monarch with England, at this moment, of the most friendly description. Frederic complained, that certain Prussian vessels had been seized and plundered by English cruizers: these complaints had been referred to certain commissioners, with whose decision he was not contented. He therefore at length declared his determination, of indemnifying the losses of his subjects, by seizing upon a certain portion of the Silesian revenues, which were mortgaged for a debt due to British merchants. It was in vain that the English civilians proved, that this was a gross injustice, inasmuch as the mortgage in question had been granted, in consequence of debts due to private individuals, and for loans made by them to the Emperor Charles the Sixth. Frederic could not be persuaded to give up his scheme of indemnity, and George the Second was too much afraid for the safety of his Hanoverian dominions, which it was reported his nephew of Prussia intended, if the satisfaction he demanded

was not granted to him, to invade, to risk a rupture between the two crowns.*

In the year 1754, Frederic added to his possessions certain lordships, belonging to the house of Orange in Holland, which he acquired by purchase of the Princess Dowager of Orange. It was in this year also, that the Corsicans, who could no longer support the iron yoke of their masters the Genoese, and were therefore determined, if possible, to deliver themselves from it, applied to Frederic for assistance, and offered him the sovereignty of their island.† It was very natural for a sovereign as prudent as the King of Prussia, and who was well aware of the little value of the island of Corsica, to refuse the offer; but it is not possible to justify his conduct, in betraying them to their cruel masters. This, however, was the course he pursued, as he forthwith acquainted the Genoese with the designs of the Corsicans.

It is impossible to pass over in silence an event which happened during this year, and which, whatever allowance we may be inclined to make, in consequence of our ignorance of the causes which led to it, cannot be regarded otherwise, than as a stain upon the memory of Frederic. The imprisonment of Frederic Baron

* Towers' Memoirs of Frederic III.—Vie de Frederic II. — Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.

† Vie de Frederic II.

Trenck in the dungeons of the fortress of Magdeburg, which commenced in 1754, and continued for ten years, was an exercise of harsh arbitrary power, for which no adequate excuse can be given.

Trenck was a Prussian of noble family, who had early entered into the military service, and had been distinguished by Frederic, who placed him in his guards, and made him his aid-de-camp. In this capacity he followed the king during the second war of Silesia. Possessed of the advantages of a fine figure, a handsome face, and great bodily force, he captivated the heart of Frederic's youngest sister, the Princess Amelia, and became her favoured lover. This attachment commenced in the year 1743: the date of it is fixed in the Memoirs of Trenck, by the circumstance he relates, which first gave rise to it. "In the winter of 1743, the marriage of the king's sister with the King of Sweden was celebrated. One day, when I mounted the guard of honour near her person, to escort her to Stettin, in the midst of the tumult which usually accompanies numerous cortéges, and while I was actively employed in endeavouring to preserve good order, my watch was stolen, together with a bit of my uniform, and the rich fringe attached to it, which were cut off. This accident amused the ladies, who bantered me a good deal about it. At length one of them said,

'Trenck, you shall not long have to regret the loss you have just sustained.' An intelligible expression of the eye accompanied these words, which penetrated me with joy and happiness. A few days after this, I was the most fortunate man in Berlin. We experienced both of us, all the transports of a first passion; and as the lady of my heart was a person, who must have inspired to any man sentiments of the profoundest respect and attachment, I have never cursed my misfortunes, though our attachment was the first source of the calamities, which have overwhelmed my life." *

The reverse in the fortunes of Trenck began immediately after the battle of Soor in 1745, when he was arrested by command of the King of Prussia, and confined in the fortress of Glatz. No cause was assigned for this imprisonment; but it was supposed that Frederic had been informed, that he had held communications with his cousin Francis Trenck, who commanded the Austrian pandours, and that he had betrayed the secrets of the Prussian army to him. This suspicion, we are assured by Trenck, in his Memoirs, was a calumny; and such would appear, in all probability, to have been the case: for what inducement could a young officer, highly favoured by his sovereign, and still more by his

* Mémoires de Frederic Baron de Trenck.

sovereign's sister, and who was in the certain road to riches and honour, have, thus gratuitously to act in a dishonourable manner. Trenck was confined at Glatz for eighteen months; his imprisonment having been lengthened, in consequence of his numerous and daring attempts to escape. At length he did succeed in effecting his escape; and entered the Russian service, and subsequently that of Austria.

Many years afterwards, in 1754, as he was passing through Dantzic, he was treacherously given up to the Prussian government, and was sent to the fortress of Magdeburg. Here he was confined for nearly ten years, with circumstances of the most aggravated cruelty. He was placed in a damp dungeon, loaded with irons of sixty-eight pounds weight, almost starved to death, and, finally, tortured, by being waked during his slumbers every half hour. This overwhelming misery did not, however, break his spirit: assisted by the pity of the soldiers who guarded him, he contrived to send letters to the Princess Amelia, and to others of his friends. By these means, he obtained money, with which he bribed the soldiers to procure him files and other tools, as well as lights, pens, and paper. His various attempts to escape are very curious, as well as the herculean labours he went through, in the progress of them. Suffice it to say, no one of them was

successful; but that he was finally released, towards the end of the year 1763, partly from the representations to her brother of the Princess Amelia, and partly in consequence of his having succeeded in bribing the imperial minister at Berlin, who demanded his liberty, as an officer in the Austrian service.

He afterwards passed a turbulent and discontented life; always engaged in law-suits and discussions respecting the succession of his cousin, Francis Trenck; which ought to have descended to him, but was, by treachery and chicanery, usurped by others. He became, at different times, a wine merchant, an editor of a newspaper, and an author of German poetry. At the commencement of the French revolution he came to Paris, where he was guillotined during the reign of terror.*

Trenck would appear to have been a man of bravery, ability, and honour; but turbulent, discontented, and quarrelsome. His Memoirs are curious, though many of the descriptions he gives in them are probably exaggerated. A veil of mystery hangs over his fate, which none can penetrate. Whether the dreadful rigour

* He went to execution with firmness, and even gaiety. Observing the crowd press forward with curiosity, he cried out, "Eh bien! de quoi vous émerveillez vous? Ceci n'êst qu'une comédie à la Robespierre." — Biographie Universelle.

exercised against him by Frederic, and which, undoubtedly, was intended to cause his death, was occasioned by the king's general notion of his being a turbulent and dangerous character? whether it was the punishment of his being a deserter? whether it arose from the persuasion of Frederic, that he had betrayed the secrets of the Prussian army to their enemies? or whether the connection between Trenck and the Princess Amelia was the ground of offence?—whether one or all of these circumstances operated, to occasion the relentless enmity shown by the Prussian monarch towards Trenck, it is impossible to determine. But whatever was the cause of such barbarity, nothing can be urged as an excuse for it. The imprisonment of Trenck must ever remain a blot, upon the fair fame of the sovereign who willed it.

In the summer of 1755, the King of Prussia, accompanied by Colonel Balbi and a single servant, made a journey, incognito, into Holland. They first went to Cleves, and proceeded from thence, by Nimeguen, to Amsterdam. Here Frederic employed himself in inspecting, very minutely, the dock yards, harbour, and shipping; and also in viewing the private collections of pictures, with which that city abounds. Among those he visited, was that of a merchant of the name of Brankamp. This gentleman was not at home when Frederic arrived; and his wife

obliged the visitor to take off his shoes, and walk about her rooms in his stockings, for fear of his dirtying them! As the King of Prussia soon found, that his presence at Amsterdam was becoming known, he did not stay long there; but returned, by the way he came, to Potsdam.*

At this time the storm was gathering throughout Europe, which was destined, in a few short months, to burst in the desolation of universal war, over the most civilized portion of the globe. The position of the King of Prussia became every day more dangerous and difficult The English and French were just gone to war, about the limits of their North American possessions. George the Second was, however, in a paroxysm of fear, lest he should be punished as Elector of Hanover, for the hostile measures he was adopting as King of England. He therefore employed himself at Hanover, where he now was, in negotiations to avert such a catastrophe.† "One subsidiary treaty with Hesse was hurried on; another with Russia, to keep the King of Prussia in awe: while, to sweeten him again, a match was negotiated for his niece, the Princess of Brunswick, with the Prince of

* Towers' Memoirs of Frederic III.

† Memoirs of the last ten years of the reign of George the Second, by Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford.

Wales.* In short, a factory was opened at Herenhausen, where every petty prince, that could muster and clothe a regiment, might traffic with it to advantage." †

The treaty between the King of England and Russia stipulated, that in case the electoral dominions of his Britannic majesty in Germany should be invaded, on account of interests or disputes which regarded his kingdoms, her imperial majesty was to furnish him with a body of troops, consisting of 40,000 infantry, with the necessary artillery, and 15,000 cavalry, and also forty or fifty galleys, with the necessary crews. These succours were to be furnished, whenever they should be applied for by the King of England, who was to pay to the Empress of Russia a subsidy of £100,000 a year, for four years; but while the Russian troops were engaged in actual service, the subsidy was to be raised to £500,000 annually. On the other hand, his Britannic majesty, if Russia was attacked, was to send a squadron of ships of war into the Baltic, to assist her. ‡

These conditions gave great umbrage to the King of Prussia, who immediately gave orders to his ministers, at all the courts in Europe, to

* Afterwards George the Third. This matrimonial project was soon abandoned.

† Lord Orford.

‡ Towers' Memoirs of Frederic III.

declare that he would resist to the utmost of his power, the introduction of any foreign troops into the empire, upon what pretence soever sent. This resolute language was heard with great dissatisfaction by the courts of England and Russia, and even by that of France, though at that time friendly to Prussia; the French government having it at that moment in contemplation, to march an army into Germany; with which view they had already collected several considerable bodies of troops on the frontiers of the empire, and had actually erected large magazines in Westphalia.

Meanwhile, the sovereigns that were the least well-disposed to the King of Prussia, fomented actively, by intrigues and money, the spirit of hostility, which was already commencing against him. Of these the most bitter in their feelings were the two empresses, who ruled the vast territories of Russia and Austria. The Empress Elizabeth had been personally offended, as has been before mentioned, by the sarcasms of Frederic upon her habits and morals, and thought the moment was now come to take vengeance upon him. Maria Theresa had even still more legitimate grounds of offence against the Prussian monarch, from the issue of the two first wars of Silesia. The loss of that province still rankled in her breast; and she also was of opinion, that the present conjuncture of affairs was

a favourable one, to overwhelm her hitherto successful rival, and to recover her ancient territories.*

Among other reasons, which encouraged the empress queen to venture into the war, which she was now about to undertake, the prosperous state of her territories, and of the revenues derived from them, was undoubtedly an important one.† By good management and ameliorations in the fiscal system of her dominions, she had been enabled to raise a much larger income from her people than her father, Charles the Sixth, had ever done; though that monarch had possessed provinces, and even kingdoms‡, which were lost to his daughter. Added to this, her husband, the Emperor Francis, was a speculating miser, who stooped to any means, and condescended to any business, which might augment his riches. These, when acquired, he lent, upon high interest and good security, to his wife's government. Indeed, as she never allowed him to interfere with politics, the love of money became his only amusement. "Surrounding him with the frightfullest maids of honour she could select, she permitted him to hoard, what she never let him have temptation or opportunity to squander."§

* Archenholz, Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans.
† Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans.
‡ Naples, Servia, Silesia.
§ Lord Orford.

He drew great sums from his Tuscan dominions, and even, it is said, conveyed away from Florence, and sold, many of the jewels which had been collected and placed in the ducal treasure by his predecessors, the magnificent Medici. The sums derived from these sources were employed by Francis in commercial speculations. He established manufactories, and lent money upon usurious interest. He undertook the commissariat of the imperial army; and, in conjunction with the Count Bolza and a tradesman of the name of Schimmelmann, he farmed the customs of Saxony; while, during the year 1756, he engaged also to furnish forage and flour to the troops of the King of Prussia, who were making war upon his wife.

In this critical state of his affairs, it became necessary for Frederic to strengthen himself, by means of alliances. Two different ones offered themselves to his notice; namely, that of France, between which power and himself a treaty actually existed; and that of England. With France he was at this time much disgusted. The ministers of that court had been long inclined to treat Prussia as an inferior power, to whom their protection was necessary. This language was peculiarly unpalatable to a sovereign who was well aware, that it was to his own merits alone, that he owed the advantages he

had gained in the late wars * ; and what made it the more so, was, the conviction he had, that this insolence was caused, by an increasing tendency in the French government towards an Austrian alliance.

This design was fostered and encouraged by the Austrian envoy at Paris, the Count Kaunitz.† This statesman, who was afterwards well known to Europe under the title of Prince, and in the situation of prime minister of the Austrian empire, was both assiduous and dexterous.‡ His grand object was the recovery of Silesia to his mistress, and he never lost sight of it. He frequently repeated to the ministers of Lewis the Fifteenth, that the aggrandizement of Prussia was their work, in return for which they could expect nothing but ingratitude from a prince, who was entirely governed by his own interest. Skilfully improving the impression, which he perceived his language began to make, he was heard to declare, as if the force of conviction had emboldened his sentiments, "that the time was now come, when the French ought to emancipate themselves from the influence of the kings of Prussia and Sardinia, and a num-

* Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.

† Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

‡ Frederic calls him "Cet homme, si frivole dans ses gouts, et si profond dans les affaires."

ber of petty princes, who studiously sowed dissension between the great powers of Europe, in order to benefit themselves. Excited by *their* artifices, the courts of Versailles and Vienna were continually contriving schemes hostile to each other, and hurtful to both; whereas, in conformity to the rules of a just policy, they ought rather to adopt such a system of public conduct, as would remove every ground of difference or jealousy, and lay the foundation for a solid and permanent peace."

These notions had at first appeared altogether extravagant to a people, who, since the rivalry of Francis the First and Charles the Fifth, considered the houses of Bourbon and Austria as irreconcilable enemies. But, as Kaunitz dexterously seized every opportunity of renewing the charge with effect, the French ministry began at length to be flattered, with the idea of two great powers giving law to Europe; and the doctrine of the imperial ambassador gained proselytes. Lord Tyrconnel, French envoy at Berlin, frequently talked ostentatiously of the independence of the *great* powers; and, on one occasion, forgot himself so far as to boast, "that should the King of Prussia equivocate but ever so little, France would withdraw her protection, in which case, he must infallibly be crushed."*

* Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.

These, and similar insulting speeches, had undoubtedly their effect upon the King of Prussia; but he was too wise a sovereign to be guided exclusively by feelings of irritation. What influenced him considerably in the decision he was now called upon to make, with regard to the alliance to be preferred, was the profound contempt he, with reason, entertained for the French government. This was now in the hands of Madame de Pompadour, the French king's mistress; a foolish woman, who was much flattered by the notice taken of her by the Empress Maria Theresa; and in those of her lover, the Abbé de Bernis, afterwards cardinal of the same name.* The latter was a man of some talent, who wrote pretty verses. He was a complete specimen of the fashionable abbé, of the time of Lewis the Fifteenth. He had occupied himself, not only in the frivolities, but also in the shameless debaucheries of that time†; and had arrived at his present eminence, solely through the favour of the king's mistress. But what finally decided the King of Prussia to adopt the English alliance was, his conviction, that the court of Russia was more likely to be permanently influenced by England than by any other power.‡ He grounded this

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de Monsieur de Voltaire.

† Mémoires de Casa Nova.

‡ Gillies' View of the Reign of Frederic II.

opinion, upon the information he had obtained from his envoys at different courts, as well as from his knowledge of the avarice and venality of the Russians, which would lead them to hold fast by the friendship of that country, which had the power of granting them the amplest subsidies.*

Strong in these views, he hastened his negotiations with England; and finally concluded a treaty with that power, on the 16th of January 1756.† By its provisions, the dominions of the contracting sovereigns were reciprocally guaranteed. Another article provided, against the invasion of Germany by foreign troops; but by a secret one, the Austrian Netherlands were excepted from this arrangement. Finally, a small sum ‡ was granted as an indemnity to the Prussian merchants, for the captures made by the English during the former war. §

Meanwhile, the government of France became more and more unwilling, as the contingency seemed to grow more probable, to lose entirely the friendship and assistance of the Prussian monarch. They were aware, to a certain degree, of the doubts which had existed in his mind, as to the course he was to pursue; and they imagined, that the best method of re-attaching him

* Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.
† Gillies' View of the Reign of Frederic II.
‡ Twenty thousand pounds.
§ Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.

to their alliance was to send him an embassy, which might at once please and flatter him. With this view, the Duke of Nivernois was appointed ambassador to Berlin, whose mission is thus shortly described by Voltaire:—"The King of France, anxious to conciliate Frederic, sent to him the Duke of Nivernois, a man of talent, and who himself wrote pretty verses. The embassy of a duke and peer, and of a poet, it was thought, would flatter the vanity and the taste of Frederic. But the latter laughed at the King of France; signed his treaty with England the very day the ambassador arrived at Berlin; played off with great civility the duke and peer; and wrote an epigram against the poet."*

The fact was, that the ratification of the English treaty arrived at Berlin, during the residence of the Duke of Nivernois in that city.† Nivernois was instructed to incite Frederic to the invasion of Hanover, and to offer him, as a reward, the sovereignty of the desert island of Tobago.‡ Frederic smiled at this singular offer; and entreated the duke to find some person fitter than himself, to be governor of the Island

* Mémoires pour servir à la Vie de M. de Voltaire.

† Gillies' View of the Reign of Frederic II.

‡ After the war of 1740, the French government had given Tobago to the Marshal de Saxe. As, however, this arrangement was displeasing to the English, it was finally decided that the island should remain a desert, and not be cultivated by any nation.

of Barataria! He concluded the conferences, by showing the ambassor his treaty with England.* Nivernois, upon this, left Berlin; and the outcry at the court of Versailles against Frederic, for deserting his friends, became very great. Yet the sovereign of Prussia had, undoubtedly, a full right to choose for himself those allies, whom he thought would be the most able and willing, to afford to him and his country that effectual support, which was necessary to enable him to exist through the awful contest, into which he was about to enter.

He had been for some time aware, that the hostile intentions of Austria, Russia, and Saxony, were of no ordinary kind; but that secret agreements existed between them, for the division and appropriation of his territories, upon the first favourable occasion. Under such circumstances, it became not only his interest, but his duty, to make friends with those powers, who were the most able to assist him; and acting upon this principle with great ability, he surely deserves our praise instead of our censure. Besides, the French alliance was on the point of expiring; so that Frederic had neither abandoned any promise, nor forfeited his honour, by preferring that of England, to a renewal of the former one with France. "The

* Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.

French, however, would not listen to reason upon the subject. They talked of nothing but the defection of the King of Prussia, who abandoned perfidiously his ancient allies: and the court launched out into such angry reproaches, that it became obvious, they were not likely to confine their resentment to mere words."*

The knowledge of the alliance of Frederic with England, helped to strengthen the friendly intercourse, which had, for some time, been increasing between France and the empress queen, and to hurry on the negotiations. On the 5th of May 1756, a defensive alliance was concluded between these two great powers; of which the principal article was, a mutual engagement to assist each other with twenty-four thousand men, in case the dominions of either should be attacked. This treaty was principally the work of the Abbé de Bernis, who thus, with a stroke of his pen, put an end at once to the course of French policy, with regard to Austria, which had been pursued since the days of Richelieu.†

The Austrians now began more openly to collect large bodies of troops. Two armies were stationed in Bohemia; one at Kœnigsgratz, under the command of Prince Piccolomini; the other at Prague, under that of Marshal Braun. At the same time, the Russians formed

* Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.

† Gillies' View of the Reign of Frederic II.

a camp in Livonia, of 50,000 men. The Saxon army, thus far, only amounted to 18,000 men; but it was in a course of augmentation.* Frederic, who was always well informed of the plans of his enemies, by means of the treachery of some of their agents†, discovered, that Russia did not mean to commence hostilities during this year, in consequence of her fleet not being ready; but that she had promised to make vigorous exertions, early in the ensuing spring.‡ In consequence of this intelligence, he contented himself with sending a small force into Pomerania, which might operate, in case of necessity, with the Marshal Lehwald, who commanded at Kœnigsberg. At the same time, he prepared the great mass of his troops for other objects.§

He also, by the same channel, found out, that the empress queen intended to make use of a most ridiculous pretext, as a reason for commencing the war. The Prussians had been accustomed to recruit some of their regiments in the duchy of Mecklenburg: this privilege, which had been long exercised, was opposed by the duke. Frederic had easily brought him to reason; and the affair, in itself most insignificant, was now forgotten.¶ The court of Vienna had,

* Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.
† In this case it was a Saxon *commis*.
‡ Histoire de la Guerre de Sept Ans, par Frederic II.
§ Ibid. ¶ Ibid.

however, determined to treat it as a violation of the treaty of Westphalia, and, as such, to require all the powers, who were parties to that treaty, to join in chastising the insolence of Prussia.*

Frederic, upon this intelligence, and these demonstrations, demanded, as a matter of form, from Maria Theresa, to know whether her intention was peace or war. To this question he received, through Kaunitz, now become prime minister, evasive answers. Aware as he was of the real intentions of the confederates, these subterfuges did not deceive him; and he deter-

* Count Hertzberg, the Prussian statesman, than whom no one was more accurately informed respecting the secrets of diplomacy of this time, having been himself the person who composed and published the apologetic memoir, founded upon the original dispatches of the Austrian and Saxon ministers, found at Dresden, has the following remarkable passage, respecting the conduct of his master in plunging into the seven years' war:—"It was clear, from the original dispatches of those ministers, that eventual projects of war and spoliation with regard to Prussia existed; but as they were only eventual, and supposed the condition of the King of Prussia's giving occasion for a war, it will always remain problematical, whether they would ever have been executed, and whether it would have been more dangerous to have waited for their execution, than to have forestalled them. However this may be, the curiosity of the king, and the treachery of a Saxon clerk, was indubitably the immediate cause of that terrible seven years' war, which has immortalized Frederic the Second and the Prussian nation, but which also very nearly ruined the state, and brought it to the brink of destruction."—Mémoire Historique sur la dernière Année de la Vie de Frederic II., Roi de Prusse.

mined at once, with that boldness of decision and ability of execution, which always distinguished him, to forestal the designs of his enemies, by attacking them, and invading their territories; before their armies and their measures were still more united, than they were at present. With this view, he signified to the court of Vienna, that he considered their answer as a declaration of war; and then prepared to invade Saxony, the possession and resources of which, were essentially necessary for the furtherance of his future designs.

Thus commenced that tremendous and protracted contest, the most unequal, to all appearance, that ever was waged; and yet in which, the weaker party was, through the merits of its commander, eventually most gloriously successful. Voltaire observes, in speaking of it, "Lewis the Fourteenth has been admired for having resisted the united forces of Germany, England, Italy, and Holland. But we have seen in our day an event, incomparably more extraordinary than that. A margrave of Brandenburgh, alone and single-handed, offer successful resistance to the house of Austria, France, Russia, Sweden*, and the greater part

* The accession of Sweden to the league against Frederic was occasioned by a revolution, which had taken place in that country. This had deprived the king and his wife (sister of the Prussian monarch) of all power, and placed it in the hands of the senate, who were entirely devoted to France.

of Germany. This is a prodigy, which can only be attributed to the discipline of their troops, and the superiority of the general, who conducts them. Chance may gain a single battle; but when a weak power resists so many strong ones, for the space of seven years, and in an open country, and is able to repair the greatest reverses, this cannot be the work of good fortune. It is, indeed, in this point, that the war we are about to treat of, differed from all which had hitherto desolated the world." *

* Voltaire, Siècle de Louis XV.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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